What Do Present Day Christians Believe

James H. Snowden

[redacted]
nowden, James Henry,
852-1936.
/hat do present day
Christians believe?

What Do Present Day Christians Believe

James H. Snowden

[redacted]

Nabu Public Domain Reprints:

You are holding a reproduction of an original work published before 1923 that is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other countries. You may freely copy and distribute this work as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. This book may contain prior copyright references, and library stamps (as most of these works were scanned from library copies). These have been scanned and retained as part of the historical artifact.

This book may have occasional imperfections such as missing or blurred pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were either part of the original artifact, or were introduced by the scanning process. We believe this work is culturally important, and despite the imperfections, have elected to bring it back into print as part of our continuing commitment to the preservation of printed works worldwide. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections in the preservation process, and hope you enjoy this valuable book.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/isbn_9781179651422

WHAT DO PRESENT DAY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE?

BOOKS BY JAMES H. SNOWDEN

The Basal Beliefs of Christianity
The World a Spiritual System
Can We Believe in Immortality?
The Coming of the Lord
Is the World Growing Better?
The Personality of God
A Wonderful Night
A Wonderful Morning
Scenes and Sayings in the Life of Christ
A Summer Across the Sea
The Psychology of Religion
The Truth About Christian Science
The Truth About Mormonism
The Meaning of Education
The Attractions of the Ministry
The City of Twelve Gates
Jesus as Judged by His Enemies
The Making and Meaning of the New Testament
Immortality in the Light of Modern Thought
Old Faith and New Knowledge
Outfitting the Teacher of Religion
What Do Present Day Christians Believe?
Sunday School Lessons, Ten Annual Volumes

WHAT DO PRESENT DAY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE?

BY

JAMES H. SNOWDEN

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1930

COPYRIGHT, 1930,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

All rights reserved—no part of this book
may be reproduced in any form without
permission in writing from the publisher.

Set up and printed. Published September, 1930

PREFACE

These hundred questions and their answers are offered as a popular exposition of the main facts and doctrines of our common Christianity. It is evident that they are not all equally or vitally important, but they are such questions as are now up for discussion and evaluation in our modern day and are giving trouble to many sincere believers.

It is further obvious that these brief chapters are not intended for professional scholars, but for general readers and especially for young people who would be glad to have plain answers to such questions. It is hoped that the volume may be used as a textbook for Christian study classes, and with this end in view a list of questions and topics for further discussion is appended to each chapter.

The title of the book implies that what Christians believe to-day differs from what they believed yesterday. This fact is obvious when, on opening any work on theology or volume of sermons fifty or a hundred years old, we find ourselves in a different religious atmosphere, and the farther back we go the greater this difference. The same process of change runs through all the Christian centuries and through the Bible itself. Paul's faith registered a marked advance on that of Isaiah, and Isaiah's on that of Moses and Abraham. Jesus himself declared that he had yet many things to say unto us and that in time he would guide us into all truth through his indwelling Spirit. All this is due to the fact that religious truth is a growing body of knowledge and experience, as is truth in all other fields, and such progress is not to surprise much less alarm us, but is to be expected and welcomed and worked for as the means of ever wider and richer spiritual life. Yet the foundation principles of our religious faith and life abide unchanged, and our Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE v

CHAPTER

I. WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN GOD? 1

II. HOW DO WE KNOW GOD? 4

III. WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE PERSONALITY OF GOD? 8

IV. IS GOD ONLY A SUBJECTIVE IDEA OR ALSO AN OBJECTIVE REALITY? 11

V. HOW CAN WE FIT OUR CONCEPT OF GOD INTO OUR MODERN UNIVERSE? 15

VI. WHAT IS THE TRINITY? 19

VII. WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF GOD? . . . 22

VIII. WHAT IS THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD? . . 26

IX. WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD? . . 29

X. WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM? 33

XI. WHAT IS MATERIALISM? 36

XII. WHAT IS PANTHEISM? 40

XIII. WHAT IS GOD'S RELATION TO THE WORLD? . 43

XIV. WHAT IS DIVINE PROVIDENCE? 46

XV. IS EVOLUTION IRRELIGIOUS? 50

XVI. WHAT WAS THE ORIGIN OF MAN? . . . 53

XVII. WHAT IS MAN? 57

XVIII. WHAT IS SIN? 61

XIX. IS THE SENSE OF SIN DECLINING? . . . 64

XX. WHAT IS RELIGION? 67

XXI. CAN THERE BE RELIGION WITHOUT A GOD? 71

CHAPTER PAGE
XXII. WHAT ARE SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY? 74
XXIII. CAN OUR RELIGION AND OUR SCIENCE LIVE TOGETHER? 78
XXIV. WHAT ARE MIRACLES? 81
XXV. WHAT IS THE BIBLE? 85
XXVI. IS IT RIGHT TO STUDY THE BIBLE? . . 88
XXVII. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT? 92
XXVIII. ARE THE FOUR GOSPELS TRUSTWORTHY? 96
XXIX. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE LETTERS OF PAUL? 99
XXX. IN WHAT SENSE IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED? 103
XXXI. WHAT NEED IS THERE OF THE INCARNATION? 106
XXXII. WHY WAS THE INCARNATION SO LONG DELAYED? 110
XXXIII. WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH? 113
XXXIV. WHAT WAS THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS? . 117
XXXV. WHY WAS JESUS A CARPENTER? 120
XXXVI. WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED? 124
XXXVII. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS? 127
XXXVIII. IN WHAT WORLD DID JESUS LIVE? . . . 131
XXXIX. TO WHAT CHURCH DID JESUS BELONG? . 134
XL. WHAT WAS THE MINISTRY OF JESUS? . 138
XLI. HOW DID JESUS BEGIN HIS WORK? . . . 141
XLII. WHAT DID JESUS TEACH ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH? 145
XLIII. WHAT WAS THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS? 149
XLIV. WHAT WAS THE FIRST SERMON OF JESUS? 152
XLV. WHY DID JESUS CALL TWELVE DISCIPLES? 156

CHAPTER PAGE

XLVI. WHAT WERE THE BEATITUDES OF JESUS? . 159

XLVII. WHAT PRAYER DID JESUS TEACH HIS DISCIPLES? 163

XLVIII. WHAT STRANGE THINGS DID JESUS DO? . 166

XLIX. WHAT NEW THINGS DID JESUS TEACH? . 170

L. WHAT WERE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF JESUS AS A TEACHER? 173

LI. WHAT WERE THE METHODS OF JESUS AS A TEACHER? 177

LII. WHAT MADE JESUS AN INCOMPARABLE SPEAKER? 180

LIII. HOW DID JESUS DEAL WITH JOHN'S DOUBT? 184

LIV. HOW DID JESUS BREAK WITH THE PHARISEES? 187

LV. WHAT DID JESUS SAY ABOUT HIMSELF? . 190

LVI. WHAT MOMENTOUS DISCLOSURE DID JESUS MAKE TO HIS DISCIPLES? 194

LVII. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS? 197

LVIII. WHAT WAS THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS? 201

LIX. WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE REQUEST OF THE GREEKS TO SEE JESUS? 204

LX. WHAT WAS THE LAST TABLE TALK OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES? 208

LXI. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER? 211

LXII. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF GETHSEMANE? 215

LXIII. WHAT WAS THE TRIAL OF JESUS? . . . 218

LXIV. WHAT WAS THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS? . 222

LXV. WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS? 225

LXVI. WHAT IS THE GREAT COMMISSION OF JESUS? 229

LXVII. WHAT WAS THE ASCENSION OF JESUS? . 233

LXVIII. WHAT HAPPENED AT PENTECOST? . . . 236

CHAPTER PAGE
LXIX. How Did Christianity Get Out into the Gentile World? 240
LXX. How Did Saul the Persecutor Become Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles? 243
LXXI. What Vital Issues Were Settled at the Two Councils in Jerusalem? 247
LXXII. What Were Paul's Missionary Journeys? 250
LXXIII. What Is the Portrait of Paul Drawn in His Epistles? 254
LXXIV. How Did Church Offices Arise? . 257
LXXV. What Pagan Elements Did the New Testament Assimilate? 261
LXXVI. How Was Early Christianity Affected by Paganism? 264
LXXVII. What Did the Church Fathers Accomplish? 268
LXXVIII. What Were the Ancient Councils and Creeds? 271
LXXIX. How Did the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches Arise? 275
LXXX. What Was Scholasticism? . . . 278
LXXXI. What Was the Renaissance? . . . 282
LXXXII. What Was the Reformation? . . 285
LXXXIII. How Did the Modern Churches Arise? 289
LXXXIV. What Is the Church? 292
LXXXV. What Is the Kingdom of God? . . 296
LXXXVI. What Is Worship? 299
LXXXVII. Why Should We Engage in Christian Work? 303
LXXXVIII. What Is the Social Gospel? . . . 306
LXXXIX. Why Is Giving a Christian Duty? . 309

CHAPTER PAGE
XC. HOW CAN WE IDEALIZE THE BUDGET? . . 313
XCI. HOW SHALL WE USE THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY? 316
XCII. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD AMUSEMENTS? 320
XCIII. IS CHRISTIANITY DECLINING? 323
XCIV. ARE FOREIGN MISSIONS A SPENT FORCE? . 327
XCV. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER RELIGIONS? . . . 330
XCVI. HAS SKEPTICISM CAPTURED OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES? 334
XCVII. WHAT IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION? 337
XCVIII. WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK FOR CHURCH UNION? 341
XCIX. WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN IMMORTALITY? . 344
C. WHAT WILL BE THE END OF THE WORLD? 348

WHAT DO PRESENT DAY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE?

THE USE OF QUESTIONS

THE interrogation point is the most significant sign in the vocabulary of human speech. A question marked the first stirring of human intelligence and it is still the first lisp of baby lips. When man asked his first question wonder was born and wisdom began to grow. A question is the mind's instinct for truth, it is curiosity rubbing its eyes awake, the entering edge of knowledge that will drive its wedge into the heart of every mystery and the very core of the universe until it splits it wide open. A question is man's challenge to the universe, and God himself cannot escape its sharp point. A question is the mind's most penetrating and powerful tool of knowledge and weapon of truth. A question is the mind standing expectant and receptive as it knocks at every new door of knowledge. Questions have led the way into all fields of knowledge. Questions are the greatest teachers of the world. Socrates never answered questions but only asked them and thereby became the greatest schoolmaster Greece ever sent out into the world, and he is keeping school yet in every land. It takes about as much wisdom to ask a good question as to answer it. A question should strike the mind as the clapper strikes the bell, i.e., set it in vibration and draw out what it has to say. Question and answer laid the corner stone of the great university. Questions have sought and found God! Hence this book.

WHAT DO PRESENT DAY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE?

I

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

QUESTIONS are the human mind sprouting and feeling out after larger explanations and a more rational or better understood world. The whole universe is a mass of interrogation points teasing us for inquiry and answer. When these questions cease to prick and sting us and we ask them no more, we have stopped growing and are done. Questions are a sign and means of ever widening horizons and richer life. The child lives by them and healthy minds never grow out of them. Questions differ in range and rank, and some are small and some are big, some relate to passing events and others lay hold on eternity.

The question why we believe in God is the greatest of all and is inclusive of all others, and in so far as we can answer it we grasp the very universe at the center and swing all the stars into their right orbits. No other question goes so deep into life and so far out into duty and destiny, this world and all worlds. Can we give in brief space some fundamental reasons why we believe in God?

CONSTITUTIONAL AND INSTINCTIVE BELIEFS

Some beliefs are latent in our very constitution and begin to act as soon as our nature stirs into activity. We do not begin by reasoning them out and reaching them as logical conclusions, but we begin to act on them with our first

to the earth and sky and general course of nature, and the child as it grows out of the unconscious dependence of infancy never grows out of this sense and need of trust. We find ourselves environed in a universe of mystery and our sense of dependence and need of trust is enormously widened and deepened. This unfolds into some form of belief and mode of worship that expresses and further feeds and develops our primary trust and enables us to live this higher life of the spirit. We do not, then, begin with proving our belief in God, but we first trust in God and then afterward endeavor to prove our belief. Our reasons for believing in God are deeper and older than our logical processes. Reason did not create this primary belief in God and reason cannot destroy it. Though we may persuade ourselves that there is no God and begin to live as though there were none, yet in emergencies the human heart will assert its constitutional nature and needs and rise up in hot rebellion against the godless deep and declare, "I have felt."

Our Belief in God Rationalized

Nevertheless our deepest instinctive beliefs must at length come up before the bar of reason and be criticized and tested in its light. While we at first believe with our hearts, yet we must also be able to believe with our minds, for reason will have its way in the long run and we cannot continue to believe with our hearts what we deny with our heads. All our constitutional beliefs expressing our primary needs are in time rationalized, such as the need of food and air and exercise and general human trust and friendship. It is true that some of them, such as the appetites, must be brought under check and guidance, but they all continue to persist and operate under this higher light.

It is just so with our belief in God. It works out and is supported and confirmed as we apply it to the world and life. It rationalizes the universe as an orderly and intelligible system of law and plan and purpose, and this is a tremendous confirmation of our belief in God. In a similar way it rationalizes our human world by giving us a worth origin of man as the offspring and image of God endowe with personality and immortal worth. It crowns the material world with a spiritual world that gives value to th material and transfigures all things with a light that neve was on sea or land. It fits into and satisfies our need physical and mental, moral and spiritual, and fills our cu of personality full.

Because this belief springs out of our deepest constitutio and is the necessary condition of our human life, an because it rationalizes the universe and fits into and fill our needs from the bottom to the top of our life, and becaus without it our world is thrown into hopeless confusion an we are infants crying in the night with no one to hear ou cry, we believe in God.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1 Does the Bible try to prove there is a God?
2. Do all people believe in the same God?
3. How does it come that people have such different concep of God?
4. Do we believe in God simply because we want a God?
5. Do professed atheists really believe in no God or do the simply disbelieve in some particular kind of God?
6. Does the mere belief in God make us religious?

II

HOW DO WE KNOW GOD?

We know God in the same way that we know one anothe It is important that we see and follow this principle all t way through our discussion of religion. Religion is not peculiar thing unlike our other principles and experience a queer and uncanny thing that only religious people kno a foreigner and alien intruder in our world wearing strange garb and speaking a strange language, but it is just our human principles and processes carried up to their highest application and richest fruitfulness. Religious faith in God is just the same faith we exercise in our human friendships and in our business, and prayer is the same thing as a child's speech to its father and the requests we make of one another. We shall make much use of this analogy and principle as we proceed. How, then, do we know one another?

Bodily Behavior

First, through bodily behavior, or physical manifestation. We never see one another, but we see only the outer manifestation that each one makes of his inner life through his bodily activity. We see the physical presence of others and then we begin to interpret their bodily behavior in terms of our own inner life, believing that the facial features and the various gestures and bodily activities of others mean the same thing in them that they do with ourselves. In the same way, we know God. The whole physical universe is a manifestation of its inner cause, and we find that its activities can be interpreted in terms of our own mind and whole inner experience. We may read it in a degree as we read the face of a friend and through all its order and plan and purpose and through its confusion, too, we hear a voice, saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here! Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself."

Language

A more definite way in which we know one another is through language, which is a special form of bodily behavior in which signs of sight and sound have definite meanings that reveal the inner life far beyond the power of bodily features and gestures. Language, man's first invention, is still his most marvelous and most powerful and fruitful means of mutual knowledge and social fellowship and life. It is a kind of window inserted in our opaque physical personality through which we look right into the minds and hearts of one another. Does not God also speak to us through language? Nature itself is full of voices that we interpret as revealing its laws and purpose in relation to us. But God has spoken, as we Christians believe, in a clearer and more sure word of teaching in the revelation of his prophets, men specially gifted to know his mind and reveal it unto us. Nearly all religions have their sacred books through which their adherents believe God has spoken unto them, and we believe the Bible is the supreme book of this kind in which holy men spoke as they were moved of the divine Spirit. It records the distilled essence and spirit of religion and it throws its light upon the nature and into the mind and heart of God, and in it God speaks to us in all the various forms of language, revealing himself and speaking to us as a Father for our instruction and guidance.

PERSONAL PRESENCE

We may know others through their bodily behavior and language and yet not come into their personal presence, as language and even bodily features may be transmitted from a distance. But this mutual knowledge is greatly deepened and sharpened, made more vivid and meaningful, when we have direct experience of personal presence. We might know through bodily behavior and speech the President of the United States or the King of England and know much of his personality and purpose, mind and character, and yet never have experienced his personal presence; but when admitted to his company our knowledge of him at once becomes more intimate. Has God revealed himself to us in this way? The need of such personal manifestation, going far beyond his manifestation in nature and in the revelation of the Scriptures, is felt and at times sorely wanted. Nature as a manifestation of God seems distant and cold: do we not need and cry for a nearer and warmer presence, even a Father's face and an everlasting encircling Arm and an affectionate Heart? This need is fulfilled in Christ. He is the incarnation of God in which the infinite Spirit that thunders through the universe has come down into our world in human form and speaks in tender accents so that the Word had breath and wrought with human hands the creed of creeds in loveliness of perfect deeds, more strong than all poetic thought. Whatever Christ did, God did and does, and whatever he was and is, God is. Our clearest and surest knowledge of God is through and in Jesus Christ.

Personal Experience

A still closer step remains. We might have these kinds and degrees of knowledge of another, such as the King of England or the President of the United States, and yet not have any personal acquaintance and fellowship with the one or the other. When admitted into his company and friendship at once our knowledge takes on a deeper form of reality and richer contents. This personal relation proceeds to grow into ever more intimate and fuller and finer fellowship which is the highest and most satisfying experience of our human world. This final step and form of knowledge we experience through personal faith in and fellowship with God in Christ. We exercise it through all the means of friendship, bodily behavior, meaningful language, personal presence and intimate fellowship in the observation and interpretation of nature, the study of the Word, the faith that sees the person of God in Christ, and these all culminate in personal faith and obedience, prayer and communion.

This knowledge of God, like all our knowledge, even our closest personal friendship, is more or less imperfect, subject to mistake and doubt, but it is as real as our knowledge of one another and it can grow through the years into the most sustaining and satisfying knowledge we can have. Eternal life is thus to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is behaviorism in psychology and what is its truth and what is its error?
2. Is language subject to limitations and do these apply to the words of God in speaking to us?
3. What is the meaning of John 1:1 that Christ is the Word who was with God and is God?
4. How can we have personal experience of God?
5. What are some imperfections in our knowledge of God? May imperfect knowledge be practically sufficient for our purpose?

III

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE PERSONALITY OF GOD?

IT is time we begin to inquire into what kind of God we do believe in and know, for there are still gods many in the world. Each one of us has his own concept of God and as no two minds can have just the same idea of any object it may be said that there are as many gods as there are religious people. However, there are great group concepts of God, such as the Buddhistic and the Mohammedan and the Christian. Some concepts of God also conceive him or it as an impersonal being and others as personal, and this is the deepest difference among these varying concepts. The Christian idea of God is that he is a personal being, and this is vital to any worthy religion.

WHAT IS A PERSON?

In general we mean by a person a conscious responsible being and more definitely a person is an individual being endowed with consciousness consisting of thought, sensibility and responsible will. An individual being is a separate entity in itself, consciousness is our awareness of objects, and thought, sensibility and responsible will are the three fundamental faculties or functions of consciousness. These powers, fused into unity and acting together as a whole, constitute a person. This definition now applies to God, although with some profound modification as will appear in our next chapter.

God Manifests Himself in Personal Forms

We necessarily interpret God in terms of his various manifestations of himself in nature, revelation and redemption. He is a unitary being, for the universe is one whole, as the word means, and all our widening knowledge of it discloses its unitary nature. However far we penetrate into its vast expanses and deeps we find it all woven of the same threads and constituting one web.

This vast web is also woven in patterns of thought, for in all our search into it we find it intelligible so that we read it as we read a book. As a book reveals the mind and personality of its writer so the universe reveals the mind and personality of its Author. Distinct marks of mind are law and order, plan and purpose, convergence of many means toward ends. Only a person could create a complicated machine or write a book in which a vast number of letters are put together so as to express ideas. These marks of mind are stamped upon the universe in all its parts down to its minutest elements, and these marks testify to a mind that could write and produce the vast volume of the cosmos as certainly as any book bears witness to the mind of its author. Mind is one indelible and indubitable mark of personality, and we find this mark in the Maker of the world.

In a similar way the universe is stamped with sensibility or it is woven of threads of feeling throughout the whole range of this power of personality. It exhibits and creates in us emotions of fear and trust and faith, wonder and mystery, beauty and sublimity. It is saturated and drenched with music down to its vibrant atoms. Our response to the wealth and riot of beauty in forest and flower, to the conflagration of the sunset and the mystery of the sea, to the night sky and the dawn, to the majesty of mountains and the dark blue ocean, to the glory that suffuses and floods the whole creation shows us that an infinite Artist painted its vast canvas and Musician plays its mighty organ and is himself endowed with the whole infinite range and variation, chords and symphonies, colors and moods of sensibility.

In a still similar way the world is an exhibition of responsible will, for it is always and everywhere active, whether in spinning suns or dancing electrons, working according to plan and purpose, and this is another manifestation of personality.

The world also comes to its highest expression in man, and man himself is a personal being with all the powers of personality. Nothing can rise higher than itself, the creator must at least be equal to the creature, and so we are in ourselves an illustration and proof of personality in God.

The same powers of God are exhibited in a still more obviously and inescapably personal way in other manifestations of him, especially in revelation and redemption. The Bible throughout speaks in terms of a person to persons, and Christ as the incarnation of God is definitely personal. Combining all these lines of witness they converge into our definition of a person as an individual being endowed with thought, sensibility and responsible will.

A Personal God Necessary to a Worthy Religion

Only a personal God can furnish us with a proper object of worship and only such a God can we trust and love and obey. Worship is a personal relation that loses all meaning when exercised toward an impersonal force and fate. Pantheism endeavors to worship such a God, but it cannot logically maintain its position and its worshipers inevitably fall back into some form of personality in their God though it be only an idol or some degrading concept of God.

Religion by its very nature calls for a Father in whom we can trust and have comfort and security and peace.

AN OBJECTION TO THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

Objections are raised to the personality of God, some of which will be considered later, but the chief one is that personality is a finite limitation and therefore could not apply to an infinite being. But is personality a limitation of being? Is a being lower or higher in the scale of existence when it is endowed with personality? The truth is that personality, so far from being a limitation, is an enormous expansion of being. God is infinitely higher and richer, more blessed in himself and more worthy of our worship, because he is a person and not merely a power. Our human personality is limited in various ways, but these are due to our finiteness and are imperfections in our personality. As Lotze says in his profound chapter on the personality of God, "Perfect Personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Is an intelligent animal, such as a dog or an elephant, a person?
2. Is personality subject to degree and growth?
3. Can we conceive of personality higher than that of man?
4. Can there be a religion without a personal God?
5. How can we be sure of and deepen our belief in the personality of God?

IV

IS GOD ONLY A SUBJECTIVE IDEA OR ALSO AN OBJECTIVE REALITY?

BOTH. The relation of subject and object in our thinking meets us in every field and involves some difficult problems in our science and philosophy. The two must be kept in proper proportion and balance and neither allowed to devour the other.

GOD AS A SUBJECTIVE IDEA

Our knowledge of any object is first a subjective idea. The simplest physical object sends up into our brain certain molecular vibrations or nervous agitations which our mind then reads off as an idea of the object; and our knowledge of the object first emerges in this subjective idea. This relation is a simple fact of experience. However, some theories of psychology and philosophy enlarge this subjective idea at the expense of the objective reality until the idea almost crowds out the object and occupies the field. In fact, one form of idealistic philosophy, solipsism, actually declares that our idea is the only existence and outside the individual mind there is no reality whatever, not even of another mind. Probably, however, no real sane solipsist ever lived

The subjective idea does have and is caused by an objective reality as various lines of evidence prove. Any other view resolves the world into illusion and absurdity. We also can test our idea of an object in various ways, such as by subjecting it to repeated experiments, checking and correcting one sense by the other senses, and by comparing it with the experience of others. These lead us to undoubting faith in the reality of the objective world corresponding in some sense and degree with our ideas of it, and this is the basis of our whole life and sanity.

This line of logic now applies to our idea of God. This is a large idea that varies in each mind. It is derived from or confirmed by the various reports that come to us from the external world and can be tested by the same methods as other ideas. Yet the tendency is to pass to the one or the other extreme, emphasizing either the subjective idea or the objective reality. We must have the subjective idea before we can have any knowledge of or belief in God whatever; and this idea comes first in our experience. It also grows with all our growth in knowledge and experience, as every one knows. But some religious thinkers emphasize the subjective idea to the extent that it loses contact with reality and may become agnosticism which denies that we have any knowledge of an objective God whatever. Even professors of theology and teachers and preachers of the Christian gospel or at least of religion may do this very thing. With them God is only an idea which we may accept as a working theory, but we are not to insist on an objective God or claim to know that there is any such God. It is plain that this reduces God to an illusion and our religion will go with it into the same dream when we find out or realize what such a view of God involves.

God as Objective Reality

As all our normal ideas have objects and on this rests the reality and sanity of our life, so with our idea of God. The idea of God must be believed to have a corresponding objective reality, or we cannot continue to hold it. The God corresponding to our idea may not be and cannot be anything near an exact duplication of our idea, for this would be to limit God to our poor power of apprehending him. Yet that it has some objective reality follows from the nature of an idea and from all the witness that the world bears to such an object. These lines of evidence and proof converge from the cosmos upon the Creator in its order and plan and purpose that are in a large measure open to every mind and that have been studied and written out by many thinkers in many volumes. The three eminent scientific thinkers with their three illustrations, set forth in the next chapter, all assume and their illustrations are based upon the reality of an objective Power if not Person in the universe. Converging in and illuminating and confirming this faith is the witness of all the religious experience of the world in practically all the faiths of mankind. It reduces the world to chaos and hopeless confusion and absurdity to suppose that there is in it no power and purpose, and whatever may be our concept of this Power and Purpose it is our objective God corresponding with our subjective idea.

Keeping the Two in Balance

It is now important that we keep the two factors of this mutual relation in proper balance so as to not let either crowd out or crowd in upon the other. We may go wrong at this point at either end of the problem. At the subjective end, we may go so far as to make the idea everything and the objective reality nothing. But we may also emphasize the subjective idea in other but less fatal ways. One danger is that we may think our idea of God fully comprehends and exhausts him and thereby expose ourselves to the condemnation of Scripture itself (Job 11:7). We may also think our idea of God is more complete and perfect than that of others, even of those in our faith and communion, and become critical of others or fanatical in upholding our idea of God and denouncing that of others. Instances are in evidence in plenty of those who exhibit these faults and speak as though they had inspired and final knowledge of the subject, the one that above all others should be held and handled in humility.

On the other hand we may push the objective reality of God to an extreme. Pantheism does this to the utmost limit when it makes God the total reality and thereby dissolves God in the universe and makes everything God except God himself. But we are in some danger in a less measure by objectifying God to such a degree that he is removed from the world and set apart from it. Or our view of God may be turned into a theological abstraction that is largely a logical fabric spun out of our own minds and loses vital connection with our religious experience. Superorthodoxy is in danger of both of these extremes, either of unduly emphasizing its subjective idea or its objective view of the nature of God.

The whole problem involves the difficult relation to the world of the divine immanence and the divine transcendence, and we must endeavor to keep a proper balance and maintain and experience both the subjective idea and the objective reality of God.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Can we know any object in any other way than our subjective experience of it?
2. Which, if either, is more important, the subjective idea or the objective reality?
3. Do the Scriptures frequently admonish us that our knowledge of God falls far short of the reality?
4. Do any two persons have the same idea of God?
5. Where can we get our best idea of God?

V

HOW CAN WE FIT OUR CONCEPT OF GOD INTO OUR MODERN UNIVERSE?

"WHAT answer can I give to those that tell us there is no God and no personality in the universe?" We were recently asked this question by a young university student who was being bombarded by students and some professors who were obsessed with some modern views of the universe, especially relating to its vast size and complexity and mystery. No use to quote the Bible in answer to such a question in such a place, and we briefly gave three answers based on the views of three of our greatest scientific thinkers: these young inquirers who may think that the foundations are going or gone will listen to such authorities.

EINSTEIN

First, an illustration used by Einstein. The universe, he said, is like a vast library. A little child goes into it and

than drop a hint, but it is a very suggestive one. He says we must not look in the painting for the painter. He is not there, though he may be nearby at the side and very edge of the canvas, but he is not in it. This means that we should not look in the creation for the Creator; he is not there, but he may be near and at its very edge, he may be behind it and over it, but he is not to be identified with it. This is a fatal blow to pantheism and falls in with theism. Those who are looking for God in the universe but are finding facts that they think exclude the existence of any God are looking in the wrong direction. We are not to expect to find God in the facts of the universe, but we are to consider whether these facts are not so arranged after the fashion of a picture that it is a marvelous combination of order and plan and purpose, form and color and beauty, and then we are to look for the painter, not in the immense canvas of the painting, but nearby, under and over it and, why not? nigh us, even in our hearts. Though the painter is not in the picture, yet the picture tells us much about the painter and cannot be understood without him.

EDDINGTON

Arthur Stanley Eddington, another of these several greatest astronomers, gives us another illustration in his latest book on Science and the Unseen World. The universe, he says, is sending us signals after the manner of a broadcasting station, and our minds are receiving radios to receive and interpret these signals. The signals of the radio are not like the things thus reported to us, but are their corresponding signs or symbols which we translate back into their original corresponding ideas. Our senses are so many receiving sets through which the universe is broadcasting to us its symbols which we, in turn, are to interpret into their real meaning. Now what do these signals tell us? All they tell us is to be and can only be read off in terms of our own minds, or total personality including our thought, feeling and will; or in terms of science and beauty and religion. They answer our questions as to the factual order and plan of the universe, our sense of beauty and dependence and trust, aspiration and worship. They do this just as clearly as the signals or communications of the radio tell us what is being said or sung, done or meant at the other end and originating source of the wireless waves. Each one of us, sitting in the receiving station of his own soul, can see and hear and interpret what the broadcasting station of the universe is sending and saying to us.

These three answers given by Einstein, Jeans and Eddington are easily grasped and are simply the interpretation of the facts of the universe and are good reasons for listening to and believing in the God in whom we live and move and have our being.

JESUS

And yet how much more satisfying is the interpretation of the universe given by Jesus? "In my Father's house are many mansions." This speaks to us in the language of father and home, two of the most fundamental and satisfying words and experiences in our human life. We can try out this interpretation by accepting it as our working theory and seeing in the universe the work of his hand and in its voices his messages assuring us of his friendship and love. And in following him we shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Are college and university students much interested in questions about God?
2. Have you any idea of what Einstein's theory of relativity is?
3. Which of the three illustrations given appeals to you with the greatest fitness and force?
4. Do these illustrations have value independently of the religious views of these thinkers?
5. What is your interpretation of the universe?

VI

WHAT IS THE TRINITY?

The doctrine of the Trinity holds that God exists in a threefold personality designated as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are distinct and capable in some sense of holding mutual relations of fellowship, and yet they are not three but one God.

Biblical Implications and Teachings

Very little implication and practically no teaching of this threefold distinction is found in the Old Testament in which such problems had not yet arisen in religious experience. In the New Testament it arises in unmistakable terms. Jesus clearly distinguished between himself as the Son and God the Father. He accepted divine worship and in many ways taught that he is coeternal with the Father. He further distinguished the Holy Spirit as a third person in the Godhead, speaking of him in personal terms, ascribing to him personal attributes and offices, and declaring that the Holy Spirit would come as his successor to carry on his work in the world. This teaching is carried through the Gospels and all the other books of the New Testament, notably in the letters of Paul. Father, Son and Spirit are associated on terms of equality in the great commission of Christ (Matthew 28:19), in the baptismal ordinance, and in the benediction. The Scriptural evidence is abundant and consistent and conclusive, so that it is admitted by scholars, even by those who do not accept the doctrine itself.

How Belief in the Trinity Developed

The belief in this doctrine was not all revealed at once, but grew through a process of development. There were some faint glimpses of it in the Old Testament, but it was among the early Christians that the doctrine slowly took form and grew into finality. This was due to their experience of Christ and then of the Holy Spirit. They learned gradually to worship Christ during his earthly ministry with them but some of them doubted his divine Sonship and equality with God even after his resurrection. However, what he became to them in their Christian experience removed all doubts and in time they could affirm that Christ is "very God of very God." In the same way grew their experience of the Holy Spirit as a distinct aspect or person of the Godhead. They experienced the indwelling of God in their hearts in a way that could be explained only by the belief that this was a manifestation of the Godhead distinct from that of the Father and the Son. All these lines of teaching and experience grew into a formulated belief in trinitarian distinctions in the Godhead which can be called persons only in a modified sense of the word person. God is not simply a magnified human person, a view that would involve him in all the limitations and imperfections of human personality and would dethrone him as God. In time, also, each of these three persons came to have in Christian belief a distinct office or work, God the Father being the Fountain and Origin and Creator; God the Son being the Stream and Expression and Executive; and God the Holy Spirit being the indwelling God applying the work of the Son and bringing all things in completion back to God. All these expressions must be understood in a symbolic sense as representing to us in terms of our experience these distinctions in the Godhead which far transcend our power of thought and expression.

The doctrine of the Trinity also emerged in Christian theology and was wrought out in the first creeds as essential to the Christian faith. At the time of the Nicene Council in 325 A.D. the deity of Christ was established in the faith of the church, and later the Holy Spirit was recognized as of coequal rank and authority. The doctrine thus originated as the result of Scripture teaching, Christian experience and theological systematization, and so has it ever stood in all the historic branches of the Christian Church.

The Trinity Reflected in Our Human Personality

The doctrine of the Trinity is not a mere human speculation born in an unreflective age, an old outworn theological dogma which has had its day and cannot survive in our day of philosophic thought. On the contrary it finds its analogy in our own constitution. We are not strictly unitarian beings but are trinitarian in nature. Our consciousness functions as thought, sensibility and will, three distinct modes of activity that cannot be resolved into psychological identity. A still closer analogy is the threefold distinction in our constitution of the conscious I, the conscious me or self, and the conscious unity of the two. We think, and we may think of ourself and we are conscious of the unity of these two activities. It is not fanciful to conceive that these three distinctions might be carried to such a degree of distinctness that they would result in three personalities or modes of being that would be capable of mutual relations of fellowship. As man is made in the image of God, his constitution must be patterned after that of God himself, and therefore it ought to reflect some likeness to God in his threefold nature.

The Trinity in Philosophy

If God were a simple unitary consciousness, what kind of existence did he lead in eternity before he put forth his creative power in finite worlds and spirits? The question plunges us into profound difficulties and will lead us back into the abysm and darkness of pantheism. Philosophy has worked out a higher conception of the Infinite as a superpersonal being with a type of personality infinitely higher than our own. This would result in a complex consciousness in which there would be interrelations of social life and love, and the greatest philosophers have arrived at such a view which evidently falls into harmony with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the three persons in the Godhead who dwelt in reciprocal fellowship through all eternity. If then we Christian theologians and believers were to cast the doctrine of the Trinity out of our faith, the philosophers would bring it back again. The doctrine is indeed one of the "high mysteries" of our faith, but it lies at the root of our theological and philosophical thought and enters vitally into our Christian experience.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why was not the doctrine of the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament?
2. Can truth be revealed before there is human capacity and some experience to understand and use it?
3. Did Jesus teach a threefold personality in God?
4. Of what practical use is the doctrine of the Trinity?
5. Do all our religious questions run into philosophy?

VII

WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF GOD?

Far more important than the question of the personality of God and of the nature of his personality is the question of his character. Belief in a good God is the source of an optimistic faith and life, but belief in an evil God would spread the blackest cloud that could be conceived over the whole sky of the universe.

God Is a Moral Being

God is a moral being. This results directly from his personality. A free will acting in the light of intelligence under the pressure of feelings and a sense of responsibility is the foundation of moral character, and we have already seen that God possesses these powers. The moral character of man is also an evidence and proof of the moral character of God, on the principle that every essential element in the nature of man must have its roots in God and is an outgrowth of his nature. Conscience is the imperial power in man, legislating on all matters of conduct, imposing its decrees and bestowing its rewards and retribution, and therefore we must believe that the same power exists in perfection in God.

But Does Not the Evil World Cloud the Character of God?

But the question still confronts us whether this moral nature of God is good or evil, or a mixture of both. The fact that we find ourselves in a world of mixed good and evil throws doubt upon this question and has made it one of the great enigmas of the ages. The world of nature is sown with storm and strife, pain and death, and the human world is a scene of disease and misery, selfishness and hatred, sin and sorrow. Does not such a world fling its black shadow up against the character of God himself? Can a good God produce an evil world, and does not an evil creation point to an evil Creator? The human mind and heart has wrestled with these questions through the ages, and they have ever been the world's Gethsemane. Yet in spite of these evils men have generally believed in a good God, and nearly all the religions of the world, especially the higher and purer ones, have held to this faith.

As to the evils in nature, they are seen to be in no small degree only apparent, imputed to nature by the projection into it of our own experience and imagination, and the planet is seen to be a world still in the making and in a state of evolution toward higher ends. As to the evils in our human world, they are seen to be largely due to human responsibility and transgression of law. Man is a germinal being in his faculties and a fallen being by reason of his disobedience to moral law as known to his own conscience. The world is fitted up for such a creature. It is a school in which his germinal powers are being developed, a hospital in which his physical and moral diseases are being healed, and a field of service in which he is working out the great problem and ends of his existence.

In the light of these facts we believe that, in spite of the vast amount of evil in the world, God is not responsible for it except in the sense that he has seen it to be wise to permit it and is turning it in his own time and ways to good ends. Just how to reconcile his goodness with evil at particular points is often a problem far beyond our power, and yet we believe that the skirts of God's holiness are clear and that with sufficient knowledge we could pluck the heart out of this mystery.

In the Fuller Light of Revelation

The light of reason and nature must ever remain dim in the presence of this great problem and can never reach a full and final solution. It is at this point that revelation lets fall its fuller light. The Bible is a record of this revelation. In broad contrast with pagan gods that are more or less stained with human faults and vices and are only magnified evil men, the God of the Bible is a God of purity and righteousness. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is the central question of the Old Testament and all its teaching in precept and example, doctrine and ordinance, psalm and prophecy, reveals God in the increasing light of holiness. The New Testament advances to a still higher view of the moral nature of God. Its central principle is that "God is love" and it sets forth all his attributes and activities as manifestations of the divine goodness. The total teaching of the Bible on this point is that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

The Character of God in Christ

The supreme revelation of the character of God is Jesus Christ. His white life grew up out of the hard soil of Judea as the one perfect thing this world has ever seen.

After all these centuries of moral advancement and philosophical study of ethics his character is still the perfect pattern of goodness, the only flawless diamond that shines resplendent amidst all the imperfect jewels of character in the world. In him all virtues and graces combine in faultless proportion and harmony. Truth and trust, purity and patience and peace, meekness and manliness, gentleness and goodness, sympathy and service and sacrifice blend their various rays into the pure light of his white soul, and he shines the Star of the ages, the Sun of Righteousness. That character, no dream of a novelist or vision of a poet, was and is a living Fact in the world, and as such it bears witness to the nature of the Creator out of whom it sprang, and in the light of his Son we assuredly know that the Father is holiness and love.

Complex Character of God

The character of God is infinitely complex and could not be comprehended by human philosophy. Its two fundamental attributes are holiness and love. Holiness is God's purity and righteousness, the self-affirmation of his integrity and worth, and love is the benevolence or good will and affection of God toward himself in his own complex personality and toward all his creatures. His holiness undergirds the universe and keeps the everlasting heavens fresh and strong, and his love floods it with his own blessedness. With a holy loving God on the throne of the universe, all existence becomes rational and moral, good and hopeful, and our human life becomes a childhood in its Father's home.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is character?
2. Does God acquire his character through experience?
3. Is God responsible for the evil in the world?
4. How can we reconcile the evil world with the sovereignty and omnipotence of God?
5. How can we best be assured of the goodness of God?

VIII

WHAT IS THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD?

A STILL deeper question relating to the personality and character of God is his relation to his creatures. Even a personal and good God might be remote from us and uninterested in us, but such a God would not satisfy our essential needs. Is God not only personal and good, but is he also our Father? This question brings God close to us and enfolds us in his everlasting Arm.

FATHERHOOD THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GOD

Fatherhood is the essential nature of God. He did not begin to be a Father when he created finite spirits, but he was a Father from all eternity. The Godhead, as we have seen, is essentially and eternally a relationship or society of personal distinctions in which Father, Son and Spirit exist in mutual fellowship and love. This complex rich nature of the Godhead is independent of the act of creation and is the necessary condition of the blessedness and the very existence of God. Without these internal and essential relations God would sink into a unitary Absolute or Pantheistic Fate in which all thought and love would be impossible.

The heart of fatherhood is kinship and love. It is a self-imparting and expansive nature that goes out to find completion and satisfaction in others of its own kind. It was this Fatherhood in God that prompted him to create human children. His Fatherhood was eternally satisfied in his own Son, but it also sought further expression and satisfaction in created sons. His Fatherhood to his eternal Son was the pattern of created sonship. This is the meaning of Paul when he said that he bowed his knees "unto the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named." Thus Fatherhood is essential in God, and is the eternal fountain out of which all human fatherhoods flow.

We do not forget the infinite depth of this mystery, but all things run into infinite deeps and this mystery is the root of the divine Fatherhood and of our divine sonship.

Man Created in the Image of God

All the creations of God must bear some marks or reflections of his own nature and likeness, and man as the highest creature we know most fully reflects his nature. This is the Scripture teaching. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." And more definitely still: "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Fatherhood and sonship mutually bear each other's image and fit into and complete each other as the die the coin. Affinity is the tie that binds together the human father and son. A common nature in them is molded into the same likeness and they have common faculties and activities. The body of the son is derived from and is shaped on the same pattern as that of the father, and the soul of the father is breathed into the son. Like father like son is a world proverb. This is the relation of God to man and of man to God. God formed the human body and breathed into it his own breath of life and thus he stamped man with his own image. That God is like man and man is like God lies at the basis of all our philosophy and theology. Our minds are tiny reflections or images of God's infinite Mind, and therefore we can think his thoughts and read the majestic language of his vast heavens and of all his creation. Our hearts bear his image and therefore we know the meaning of fellowship and love and of all the mystic emotions. Our wills are energized by his will and therefore we can do the same works that he does. The son repeats the father, and man repeats God. It is true there is an infinite difference between God and man in degree, but not in kind. The candle does not compare with the sun in size and splendor, but it is of the same substance and glory. So we are sparks of God and shine with his light. The dewdrop is tiny compared with the sun, but it reflects in its bosom the full orbed image of the vast solar sphere. This is the high rank and dignity, the power and glory of man that he is a son of God bearing the Father's image.

God's Fatherly Care and Love

Immense consequences flow from the Fatherhood of God. This imposes upon him all the obligations of fatherhood, such as protection, care, guidance, fellowship and love. We have a right under proper caution and limitation to interpret God's Fatherhood in terms of our own and to know that all the affections of our human hearts for our children are but drops of love out of the infinite Heart of God. Whatever exists in finiteness and faultiness in us exists in him in infinite fullness and perfection. And so we believe that the heavenly Father will not disappoint us in fulfilling all fatherly relations. If we, being evil, give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give good gifts unto us? And God does not fulfill the fatherly relation simply because he is under obligation to do so, but he does so out of the freeness and fullness of his fatherly nature. It is in him a fountain gushing out in streams of affection and delight upon his children. He loves us with the same spontaneity and joy that we love our children, only in an infinitely deeper and fuller and richer measure.

The Best Name for God

Father is the most fully significant, the highest and best name for God, showering upon the most charming memories and suggestions. Other names for God, such as Spirit, the Eternal, the Mighty God, are valuable and help to fill out the picture that we strive to form of him, but better than all these and inclusive of them all is Father. It is the name that Jesus used and filled out to fullness it had never contained before, and it is the name by which all his children know him best. It throws its light upon him and discloses him to us in the most endearing relations and it lets us see into his very heart. It draws us into his everlasting Arm and presses us close to his breast so that we can feel the warmth of his love and hear the beating of his Heart. Into his Arm we fall in trust and know that all things are working together for our good. The very universe then becomes friendly, for we know it is our Father's home.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Is the Fatherhood of God taught in the Old Testament?
2. Does the Bible teach that God is the Father of all men?
3. What difficulties are there in believing in the Fatherhood of God?
4. Can a child always understand the ways of a father?
5. Does the whole world cry for a divine Father?
6. How can we most surely know that God is our Father?

IX

WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD?

AN attribute is a capacity or power which we attribute or ascribe to an object to explain its activities. By a process of observation and inference we pass from its outer behavior to its inner constitution. Can we apply this process to God?

HOW CAN WE KNOW THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

It seems like the height of presumption to try to penetrate into the inner nature of God, but the attempt is in line with other like things we do. The astronomer applies this process to the constitution of a star. From his observations of its distance, size, temperature, weight and other activities he deduces that it must be composed of atoms of certain kinds, that it has a certain internal density and temperature and has capacities and processes by which it generates energy, and thus he arrives at at least some of his attributes. We may go a step further and apply the same process to the cause of the star and deduce certain attributes that God must have as its creator. We extend the same process to the whole world, including man, and deduce further attributes of God.

The astronomer has a second means of deducing the constitution of the star. He works out mathematically the powers the star must have independently of his observations and then applies the result to the heavenly body. Thus Sir Isaac Newton demonstrated that as a mathematical necessity or in the nature of things, planets moving around the sun would sweep, each with its radius vector, over equal areas in equal times. He did not at all resort to observation to work out this result, but reached it by necessary inference and then found it confirmed. In a similar way we may take our idea of God, especially as it is based on our own personal constitution as being patterned on the image of God, and clearing it of all finite limitations and imperfections and faults, apply this expanded and perfected image to God. God has the same attributes we have, only they exist in him in infinite power and perfection. The astronomer trusts his tremendous results, far outrunning his observations, and following the same methods we trust the result when we carry them up to God.

The Metaphysical Attributes of God

The divine attributes are constitutional powers in God inherent in his eternal essence, and not in any degree the result of growth and experience, as they are in us. They may be grouped in classes for the sake of our convenience. One broad division is into the metaphysical and the ethical. The metaphysical include the attributes that relate to his nature and powers not involving moral obligations and character. They are first the spirituality of God, which affirms that his nature is essentially spirit as opposed to a material substance. Spirit can only be known in our experience but we define it as conscious, living energy. This attribute of God lifts him above material conditions and degradations into the light and glory of pure and perfect infinite spirit. Other metaphysical divine attributes are omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, which are largely self-explanatory. Omniscience means that God knows all knowable things, past, present and future, including the free acts of responsible creatures. This omniscient knowledge of God is not the result of observation and reasoning, as is our knowledge, but is intuitional and immediate, all things ever lying within the field of his consciousness. Such knowledge is necessary to the sovereignty of God, for if he did not know all things he would not know what is coming and would be plunging like a blind God through unknown seas and storms. The omnipotence of God means that he can do all rational things, his power is equal to any demand that his omniscient rule can make upon him. If he did not have such power, again his sovereignty would be impaired and imperiled and he might be caught in a cosmic crisis in which he would be impotent. His omnipresence means that God transcends the limitations of space and time and all places and events are equally and eternally present to his mind. While these attributes go infinitely beyond our powers and experience, yet we have them in a finite degree and we attribute them to God as the necessary powers of his Godhead.

The Ethical Attributes of God

The ethical attributes of God relate to his moral nature and relations. Primary among these is his purity, which means absolute freedom from any moral taint or stain, his perfect holiness. Next in order is God's truth, which is a primary attribute in his relations to the world. Truth is the correspondence of ideas with their objects, of thoughts with things, and especially of words with their meaning. God not only knows all things but knows them as they are in all their relations and meaning, and all his expressions of himself, such as the manifestation of himself in his works and communication of his wisdom and will through his Word, are in accordance with reality. There is no deception in him, all his words and ways are reality and truth and in him is no darkness at all. Another fundamental ethical attribute is his justice, which means that God deals with every one according to his due or that which he owes him as a debt of right. His judgments are true and righteous altogether. Another and his highest and most glorious ethical attribute is his love, which means his good will and affection and mercy toward all his creatures, especially those who are his children bearing his image.

These attributes and all others are not separate capacities of his nature, but are all inherent in the unity of his constitution and express the one unitary yet rich nature of God. They combine into his character and act in perfect harmony so that there can be no division and disharmony between his justice and his love, his truth and his grace. In him mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. These attributes in their unity constitute the nature of that God and Father whom we know and worship and love, the ever blessed and glorious God.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What are some attributes of man?
2. Do the ethical attributes of God put him under obligation to man?
3. Do the Scriptures teach these and other attributes of God?
4. Is there danger, in presuming to infer the divine attributes, of making our own God?
5. What use is it for us to know the attributes of God?

X

WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM?

PHILOSOPHY is constantly impinging upon and invading the field of religion and its effect is either strengthening or weakening, laying deeper and more solid foundations for its faith and life, or undermining and destroying them We need at this point to examine several of the more important and prevalent of these forms of philosophy or theories of the ultimate nature of the world.

WHAT AGNOSTICISM IS

One of these is the doctrine of agnosticism. This asserts that the nature of the world is such and the powers of the human mind are such that it is not possible for us to know the nature of ultimate reality. The point is not that we are ignorant of this reality, but that it is impossible that we ever should know it in the least degree. We are shut out from it by an impassable wall through which we cannot penetrate, and so it is useless for us to delude ourselves into believing that we ever can know anything about God or whether or not there is a God. This philosophical agnosticism has percolated down into the general mind, and it is a common state of thinking and more generally of feeling among many people that the whole question of God and the world and religion is simply all a muddle and nobody really knows anything about it. It is readily seen that this is no merely theoretical belief that can have little effect upon life and religion, for it is a deadly opiate that will drug the conscience and the whole religious life. It begets in the mind and heart the feeling that the whole matter of religion is a delusion and a useless waste and worry, and that it were better that it were swept out of the world. We must meet this view and especially this feeling, or it will deaden and destroy our religion.

and misinterpret the world. Nothing is as it seems to us with the result that we know not anything as it is. Which last result is its own undoing to the theory of agnosticism, for if its principle is true, then we cannot know anything, not even that we cannot know. It cuts up by the roots agnosticism itself and literally commits suicide. The outcome of this argument is that we must accept the mind as a trustworthy organ of knowledge, especially when critically used, or all knowledge is at an end. A thoroughgoing agnostic of this type ought on his own theory never to say a word that he expects others to believe, because he has cut away all grounds of knowledge and trust. Yet Mr. Spencer wrote ten volumes of agnostic philosophy, every page of which is discredited by his own theory. He professed to know entirely too much for one who claimed to have proved that we cannot know anything. We believe that both these forms of intellectual agnosticism have lost ground and are disappearing on the higher levels of philosophy.

Esthetic and Religious Knowledge

These forms of agnosticism are intellectual, but there are means and forms of knowledge which these arguments do not touch. We interpret the world in terms of emotional value in the fields of poetry and art and religion. These kinds of knowledge are as legitimate and are generally far more vital than mere scientific knowledge. The scientist interprets the ocean in terms of chemistry and the sky in terms of physics, but the poet looks at the ocean and sky and sees far deeper into their real nature and mystic meaning. This means of knowledge is another way of penetrating the veil of phenomena and it discloses a more immediate and vital vision and experience of ultimate reality.

Religious Agnosticism

There is always some truth in any error, and the truth in agnosticism is that we know God only in part, an infinitesimal part. The Bible itself contains much of this religious agnosticism, ever warning us, Who by searching can find out God? and bidding us look at the night sky and then exclaiming, Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! We must ever keep our minds humble with a sense of our finite limitations and of the unsearchable greatness of God. Yet we may always know enough about him through his many revelations of himself to know and to do his will.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is philosophy?
2. Show that agnosticism refutes itself.
3. Are we constantly inferring causes from their effects?
4. Can we safely apply this principle to the world as a system of effects?
5. Give instances of how we interpret the world in terms of emotional value and apply this principle to the religious interpretation of the world.

XI

WHAT IS MATERIALISM?

The doctrine of materialism is of ancient lineage and was held by some of the Greek and Roman philosophers. It is still current in our modern world, and yet something has happened to it in the higher regions of thought so that it has largely lost its power to create alarm in the ethical and religious field.

What Materialism Is

This doctrine conceives that matter is the primary and sole reality and that, in the older form, it consists of very small particles of uniform size and nature, hardness and impenetrability, and that these are in incessant motion, an infinite swarm of them filling all space. They strike and clash and cling together in larger bits and knots and masses and constitute all objects from microscopic atoms and molecules up to stars and systems. As beings grow more complex they are more highly organized aggregations of this primal matter. Life itself is a finer grade of such organization and the human brain is nothing other than the most complex and subtle combination of atoms that we know. Not only so, but our knowledge and affections and will and the very soul itself are only activities of atoms. Behavioristic psychology, the latest form of materialism, goes the whole length of the theory, denying that we know anything of a subjective consciousness and affirming that we know only bodily reactions. Thinking consists of certain contortions of the muscles in the windpipe. The theory needs only to be stated to see how destructive it is of all our human worths and aspirations and dreams. The theory, also, needs only to be stated in the form of behaviorism to see its absurdity as it uses consciousness to deny consciousness and thereby literally commits suicide.

The Fundamental Difficulty

The fundamental difficulty of materialism is that our consciousness seems indubitably to be of a different nature from moving and clashing atoms, however mysterious their nature and movements may be. We know the human brain, not only from the outside as so much highly organized matter, but also more intimately and immediately from the inside as we are aware of the consciousness that is going on in connection with it. That there is some connection between the two is also an undoubted fact, but there is no thinkable way in which we can translate atomic motions into conscious thoughts. We have an external knowledge of matter through our senses and an immediate knowledge of our minds through intuition or direct awareness, and the two are disparate and cannot be brought together under one principle or kind. The impossibility of thinking a passage from the one to the other has always been admitted by eminent materialists, such as John Tyndall, and this barrier stands to-day with no sign of yielding or being penetrated.

What Has Happened to Matter

Although this frontal resistance to materialism has not lost but gained in cogency as we know more about mind, yet the doctrine has suddenly found its bottom fallen out by an undermining attack upon its primary foundation, or by an unexpected and startling discovery of the nature of matter. Matter itself has dissolved in the alembic of science. It was first broken up into molecules and these were divided into atoms which were long regarded as the ultimate indivisible and indestructible particles supposed to remain rigid and immutable through all changes as the last limit and final frontier of matter in all its forms. But all atoms are now known to be themselves highly complex systems composed of electrons and protons, these being very small as compared with the atoms, and are believed to be bits of electricity revolving in orbits within the atom at speed approaching that of light; or, according to the more recent theory of A. H. Compton, they are "rather diffused through the sphere of the atom like raindrops in a cloud." But what are the electrons? Possibly modifications of the universal ether, or, that medium having been dispensed with by some authorities, centers of energy of wavelike structure. It is now further known that the electrons and protons themselves dissolve into the energy of light and heat, and the sun is thus radiating four million tons of its matter into space every second. Science now views electrical waves of all kinds as pulses or quanta of energy shooting through space. The universe is thus a mass of energy acting according to plan and purpose, and such energy we know in ourselves as will. By our will we move things and work out our purposes, and it is a step we can hardly escape taking that the universe is a vast or infinite Will. Along the same line of reasoning we reach the conclusion that the universe is the manifestation of an infinite Mind.

Modern science is now supporting this view. Professor J. S. Haldane, an eminent English authority in physical science, tells us that "the material world which has been taken for a world of blind mechanism is in reality the spiritual world seen very partially and imperfectly, and that the only real world is the spiritual world." An equally eminent American authority, Robert A. Millikan, declares: "We can look with a sense of wonder and mystery and reverence upon the fundamental elements of the physical world as they have been partially explored to us in this century." And Sir Oliver Lodge assures us: "I tell you that the universe is great and splendid beyond our imagination. Let us not take a pitiful mean outlook. Nothing is too great or too good to be true." The whole outcome of recent science and philosophy is that matter as the basis of the old materialism has melted and dissolved into something very like spirit. As A. J. Balfour says, in his *Theism and Humanism,* "We now know too much about matter to be materialists."

This at once frees the universe from the ironbound mechanism of matter that had no room for mind and freedom and responsibility and smothered the personality of both God and man and left only a strangled and dead universe without permanent worth or any hope, and transmutes it into a roomy and friendly world for the dwelling and education and exercise of all the powers and aspirations of the human soul and opens out infinite vistas for endless life in the world beyond. The old materialism is dead and should frighten us no more.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What truth is there in materialism?
2. How does materialism account for mind?
3. What is the fundamental difficulty in the theory?
4. What is the present scientific view of matter?
5. What are the moral consequences of this doctrine?

XII

WHAT IS PANTHEISM?

PANTHEISM is another ancient doctrine that has widely pervaded and, at points, deeply saturated the world, especially in the Orient where as in India it has run its logical course and brought forth its appropriate fruits. It assumes various forms, and materialism is one form and the more modern doctrine of deterministic monism is another form, and all fall under the same condemnation.

WHAT PANTHEISM IS

Pantheism affirms the reality of one eternal substance which is forever evolving into all the temporary aspects of the world. Spinoza, the leading modern pantheistic philosopher, held that there is one infinite substance with an unknown number of attributes, of which we know two, thought and extension, the one being mind and the other matter. This unitary substance comes to consciousness in mind and extends itself spatially in matter, and thus we have two fundamental aspects of the world we experience. The one eternal substance, however, has consciousness only in man and in any other finite minds that may exist, but is itself unconscious and impersonal. Impersonality is the deepest root of pantheism. The impersonal substance also unfolds into its temporal manifestations by necessity, and again we are caught in the coils of a fatalistic system. "The disposition," says Lotze, "which commonly governs the pantheistic imagination is the suppression of all that is finite in favor of the Infinite, the inclination to regard all that is of value to the living soul as transitory, empty, and frail in comparison of the majesty of the One, upon whose formal properties of immensity, unity, eternity, and inexhaustible fullness it concentrates all its reverence."

There is fascination in this system that widely appeals to the human mind. The mind gravitates toward unity and fixity, and this system seems to reach final and supreme unity and to satisfy the craving for release from change and for eternal rest and peace. Christian Science has fallen into this pit in its impersonal "Principle," and Mr. H. G. Wells' *God the Invisible King* and probably Bergson's *Creative Evolution* have clothed it in attractive literary and philosophic forms.

Of course there is a great truth embodied in pantheism, as there is some truth in all error. This truth is the unity of all things and that in God we live and move and have our being, a truth that has been enormously expanded and illuminated by our modern knowledge. But this truth must be carefully discriminated from and guarded against the impersonality and determinism that sink and smother all things in a common sea of unconsciousness.

A Destructive Doctrine

This theory violates and destroys our whole sense of personality and responsibility. It resolves these high powers of the soul and the soul itself into motion and force and thus degrades them to a level with the growth of grass and the blowing of the wind. This contradicts our mental and moral intuition of freedom, which is more certain than any argument science and philosophy can construct against it. Of course the doctrine cuts up by the roots our whole moral and spiritual life and dooms all our highest hopes to the fate of a baseless delusion. The purely dynamic theory of the world views it as a vast conflagration burning to an ash heap, in which spirit is only a fine flame; as a machine running down never to go again, in which consciousness is only a tiny cog. This view makes short work, not only with theology, but equally with psychology, ethics, economics, politics, and history, by reducing them all to physics and raises over the entire universe the specter of fatalism and final extinction. The only escape from this fire and ash heap is the view that sees the world as a spiritual system in which energy is will, substance is spirit, ultimate reality is personality, and the eternal God is all in all.

THE OUTCOME OF THE SYSTEM

The outcome of this system of thought is that all the myriad aspects of the world are mere illusion, richly colored bubbles on the ocean of the infinite that for an instant flash their iridescence and then burst, or angry waves that for a moment rise and display the gleam of their white fangs, and then bubble and wave sink back into the black depths of oblivion. Pantheism is as fatal to the reality of our human personality as it is to that of the infinite substance, for it reduces it to one of the illusions of the world. It is equally fatal to all free will and responsibility, worthy character and conduct, for these, too, are determined as certainly as the wind and waves. In such a system "everything is God but God himself."

The doctrine necessarily tends to deaden and destroy the sense of freedom and responsibility, kill conscience, sink the spirit in the flesh, drown virtue in a sea of immorality, and submerge religion itself in sensuality, as is seen in India. It lowers and destroys the sense of the worth and blessedness of life and turns it into bondage and bitterness, a hereditary and awful curse which is to be thrown off by any means, however painful and self-sacrificing, in order that the burdened soul may escape into oblivion and extinction.

THE GOD OF PANTHEISM

The God of pantheism raises a dread specter which paralyzes life with hopelessness and despair. For it is "an immense solitary specter—it has no shape, it has no sound, it has no place, it has no time. It is, and was, and will be, it is never more nor less, nor glad nor sad. Its name is Nothingness—and the sands fall down in the hour glass, and the shadows sweep around the dial, and men alone wake and sleep, forget and love and hate and know it." In such a world there can be no real life and love, faith and hope, for all these are the strangled children of our illusion and delusion. This fatalistic impersonality of pantheism is its own deepest and surest contradiction and condemnation. Our hearts, in which eternity has been set, cry out against it as fatherless and motherless children cry in the night, and our deepest constitution and most urgent needs refuse to receive this stone for bread.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is pantheism?
2. What great religions are pantheistic?
3. Why is it so attractive?
4. What are its errors and dangerous tendencies?
5. How can we oppose it?

XIII

WHAT IS GOD'S RELATION TO THE WORLD?

The theistic and Christian view of the world is that it is the product of God's creative wisdom and will, in which he dwells and works out his purposes.

God the Creator of the World

The world is the outgoing of God in creative thought and energy by which he gives expression to his intelligence and feeling and will. We find that the world is an intellectual fabric throughout, expressing and embodying thought as plainly as a book; and equally it is an emotional fabric, a vast artistic canvas shot through with all the forms and colors of beauty, a poem surcharged with delicate sentiment and majestic passion, a sublime symphony of music rolling through the ages; and once more it is equally a mighty act, a stream of volitional energy flowing through all things and embodying itself in deeds. The world is thus a manifestation of the thoughts God is thinking, and of the emotions he is feeling, and of the deeds he is doing; it is his own employment and enjoyment. It is the pure product of his own being. But this is not the same as saying that it was "created out of nothing," a meaningless phrase that has no basis in Scripture, science or philosophy. This creative process may be viewed as eternal, for God has always been thinking and feeling and doing, and this eternal activity of his issues in the ever existing world. It is true that this present solar system and starry heavens had a beginning, but it has such a beginning every moment as the world is always falling fresh from the hand of God or issuing as his present thought and activity.

The Dualistic Conception of the World

Two leading views are entertained at this point as to the nature of the world in its relation to God. The first is the dualistic view which holds the common traditional doctrine that matter is an extended insensate substance, of a different nature from mind, external to mind, and acting under necessary mechanical laws. This primal matter with its mechanical laws was created in the beginning by God, and thus nature was set agoing as a vast machine external to God, a huge mass or lump that lies outside him and operates according to its own laws, though still under his control. This machine is also external to human souls and all finite spirits, and in a subordinate degree is subject to human direction.

This view of the world when introduced into theology works badly. It tends toward deism, which puts God outside his world so that he stands aloof from it and keeps his hands off it except as he may intervene at times and points. This view also interposes between God and man a mechanical system that threatens to obstruct their mutual relations and fellowship. It was this dualistic view that enabled Hume to deal the Christian religion such a deep wound with his objection to miracle as a stoppage of the machine of nature which no amount of evidence could prove.

The Idealistic Conception of the World

The other view of the world is that of idealism which has long prevailed in the field of philosophy, a view that was held by Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas and Calvin and Jonathan Edwards and is still regnant on the higher levels of thought. According to this view, the world itself is a spiritual system, an immediate manifestation of the life of God. Nature as we know it is the experience we have as our minds react on God's mind, or as his Spirit environs and operates upon our spirits. It is therefore not an extended and insensate substance, a view that is even disappearing from the field of physical science with its discoveries of the nature of matter and of the principle of relativity, but it is God's own life as he thinks and feels and wills the world. The world sustains somewhat the same relation to him as our thoughts and emotions and purposes do to our own minds and hearts, as the poet's vision does to his imagination and the musician's song to his soul.

The world is not, therefore, a machine external to God, but is a spiritual state or system immanent in God and manifesting itself to finite spirits through the causal relations it sustains to them. The physical energies of the world are not mechanical forces of a non-spiritual nature, but are the ways in which the will of God regularly works in the light of his wisdom. The laws of nature are thus simply the habits of God and are constantly subject to and are the expression of his wisdom and will. This sweeps away the mechanical deterministic system that has been so troublesome and dangerous in theology and Christian experience and ushers us into the immediate presence of "him with whom we have to do."

A Congenial System for Religion

This view furnishes a congenial system for providence and the supernatural. It interposes no intractable mechanism between us and God in which we are imprisoned and through which God must thrust his hand to reach and help us, but it wraps him around us with or immerses us in his presence and breath and makes every activity of nature his immediate free act. God is immanent in the world, and the world is immanent in God, and this pours his presence into every atom, or rather makes the whole world the immediate expression of his presence and purpose and power. Then his providence does not simply touch the world at points or in spots, but fills and animates it throughout. In a similar way a spiritual view of the world makes room for the supernatural, which is God's extraordinary way of working, or what seems to us extraordinary, and is just as easy and natural to him as his ordinary working and is only a variation of his regular habits. As nature is plastic to his every thought, being only the expression of his wisdom and will, he needs to stop no rigid machine or break or bend no inviolable law to accomplish some special purpose, but only needs to think and will it. This spiritual view of the world is reflected in Scripture, which as an Oriental book is saturated with idealistic modes of thought and expression, and is simply an exposition of the grand truth that "in him we live, and move, and have our being."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What evidence is there that the world has been created?
2. Is divine creation still going on?
3. How can God be both in the world and also above it?
4. What is a law of nature?
5. Did God create the laws of nature?

XIV

WHAT IS DIVINE PROVIDENCE?

The providence of God is a special aspect of his general relation to the world, but it calls for special exposition and application.

God Carrying Out His Plan and Purpose

Providence is the process by which God carries out his plan and purpose. God is immanent in the world in continuous creation, which is the widest aspect and application of his providence. Our universe, whether in our own galaxy or in the spiral nebulæ whose enormous arms studded with stars appear to be other systems condensing into other galaxies like our own, is still on the anvil of creation in the mighty workshop of God in which we see suns flying off like sparks of fire. Our solar system is undergoing constant changes, and our earth is still in the factory and is being hammered and carved into shape and use. God is carrying on the work of creation in every star and root and leaf as certainly as he ever did and is immanent in every atom and vibration. "My Father worketh hitherto," said Jesus, meaning that God is ever at work.

God Active in Our Human World

But is God present and active and struggling and suffering in our human world as it slowly and painfully fights its way up from the slime of savagery and the ethics of the jungle to the heights of our moral and spiritual civilization? Or is he only a spectator of the scene, sitting upon his throne in ease and splendor while his human children are involved in this awful strife? This is the point that pinches and pains our modern thought. At this point, also, there has been a climatic change in our modern views. Ancient thought and mediæval art represented God as eternally resting. The Greek and Roman gods reveled in everlasting dissipation, and the Italian painters picture God as reclining on a luxurious throne or floating in gorgeous clouds. The impression has not yet wholly passed from our minds that God has nothing to do. It is pleasant to think of him as an eternal idler always having a good time. Labor is a disagreeable thought to us and seems a degradation to God. But the Bible boldly represents God as a laborer, and this is an infinitely higher and nobler view of him than that of pagan thought and mediæval art.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE

The Scriptural doctrine of providence puts God right down in the midst of our human world, appointing unto us the bounds of our habitation and numbering the very hairs of our heads. And this applies to his control over our human wills and actions, which is involved in the doctrine of predestination which is a special aspect and application of providence. If God could not thus control human wills he would be shut out from the larger part of our human world and would have little control over it. He would then be ignorant of what is coming and would be as a blind God plunging through uncharted seas without knowing where he was going. This view is an intolerable thought of God and leaves us with no real God at all.

It is true that the problem of how to reconcile God's sovereignty with man's free agency is insoluble to our finite minds, but we are not without some experience of it in our own lives. We are constantly controlling others and yet they are exercising their own freedom and responsibility. An architect draws up the plans and specifications of a great building, and the moment the contract is signed a multitude of men, perhaps all over the world, are set at work doing his will and yet they are also freely doing their own will. What we can do in a finite and imperfect way, God can do in an infinitely perfect way, and so known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world and he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

A STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING GOD

The notion of an inactive and impassive God has vanished from our theology. He toils with the toiler and weeps with them that weep and rejoices with them that rejoice. He is in the spirit of widening good will that is drawing all men into a new sense of unity and brotherhood and preparing the way for the Republic of God on earth. God is indeed struggling and suffering with us that he may help bear our infirmities, overcome our enemies, and bring many sons to glory.

If it be asked, Why does not God in his omnipotence cut the struggle short and bring instant victory? the answer must be that moral results cannot be effected by mere power, however great, but can be achieved only by moral means and processes. Truth and persuasion, sympathy and love, are the only proper means to this end. God having endowed us with personality must respect our moral free agency and deal with us as persons; he can win us only as he struggles and suffers with us. God is limited in his omnipotence, not by any lack of power on his part, but by the lack of capacity on our part. This is the solution of the problem that embarrassed so sincere a seeker after religious truth as John Stuart Mill and led him to believe in a finite God. God is helping us and we are helping God, and this enables us, in the language of Mill, to cherish "the feeling of helping God," "inasmuch as a battle is constantly going on, in which the humblest human creature is not incapable of taking some part, between the powers of good and those of evil, and in which every even the smallest help on the right side has its value in promoting the very slow and often almost insensible progress by which good is gradually gaining ground on evil, yet gaining it so visibly at considerable intervals as to promise the very distant but not uncertain final victory of God." This puts God in direct sympathetic and helpful relations with our human world and life and makes him a coworker with us so that even in all our afflictions he is afflicted and is indeed our Friend and Father at every point.

And so the doctrine of divine providence assures us that "God is a very present help in trouble," and that "he is not far from each one of us," for his "word is nigh thee and in thine heart."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Do we have the power of providence?
2. Does divine providence involve any new difficulty in principle as compared with human providence?
3. Must divine providence, to be effective, include all things?
4. In what sense can God struggle and suffer?
5. Can omnipotence be limited?
6. How can we reconcile divine providence with the evil in the world?

XV

IS EVOLUTION IRRELIGIOUS?

Evolution from a religious point of view is God's way of creating things; it is the divine program and process of creation. If we put this principle at the beginning of our answer to this question it will keep us on the right road. It is confusing this religious point of view with scientific evolution that causes so much trouble to religious people.

Scientific Evolution

Science, however, does not deal with religious views of the world, but studies its phenomenal appearances, its facts that can be tested by the senses. The principle of evolution is applied to every field and on a grand scale to cosmic evolution in the heavens. It is held that the solar system and stars and nebulæ as they exist to-day have developed out of previous states by a process of genetic continuity. As the word is ordinarily used, however, it applies to biological evolution or the origin of species of plants and animals by a process of birth from preëxisting species by descent with modification. The question of the underlying and ultimate cause of the process belongs to philosophy and theology and does not fall within the field of science. This ultimate cause may be viewed as materialistic and deterministic, or as theistic and free, and at this point misunderstanding arises. The very word evolution to many people suggests materialism, but the two have no necessary connection. An evolutionist may be a materialist or an agnostic, or he may also be a theist and a Christian, and many if not most evolutionists are Christians or at least theists.

Grounds of Belief in Evolution

Scientific men are practically unanimous in holding to evolution as a general fact, though they differ in details, especially as to the proximate factors in the process. However, they do not ask us to accept the theory on this ground, for this would be appealing to us on the ground of their dogmatic authority. They have reasons for their belief which they have patiently wrought out through more than a hundred years of study and which have accumulated into a mass and weight of evidence that are conclusive with them. These reasons are in no degree secret or so recondite that we cannot understand them, but they are written out in libraries of books and presented in lectures and journals and newspapers, and, better still, are inscribed upon the rocks and woven into the whole web of nature, and all this evidence we can see and interpret for ourselves.

The First Fact

The first fact that lies at the root of this subject is that all plants and animals are now originated by a process of development or evolution, every one of them from microbe to man starting as a single cell and evolving into maturity. If God now makes animals in this way, why could he not have created the first member of each new species in this way instead of by a separate creation? This process of creating species involves no new principle or difficulty over the creation by the same process of individual animals. The one no more rules out God and is irreligious than the other. Dr. James McCosh, a man eminent in both science and philosophy and a tower of orthodoxy, at once saw and proclaimed this fact in the early history of evolution. "There is nothing irreligious," he writes, "in the idea of development, properly understood. We have constant experience of development—of the development of individual plants and animals from parent plants and animals. And why, if proof be produced, should we not be allowed to believe in the development of a new species from the crossing of two species in favorable circumstances?" We think this settles any religious difficulty in the matter. Evolution no more rules God out of the origin of new species than it does out of the origin of individuals.

FURTHER GROUNDS OF BELIEF

The facts and arguments for biological evolution are broad and numerous, and can here only be hinted at in a few sentences. These are found in the facts of the modifiability of all living organisms, the principle of classification, the facts of geographical distribution, geological succession, embryological recapitulation, vestigial organs and blood tests, and these are "facts" or "things done" in the most literal sense, open to everyone's observation, and they carry conviction to the world of educated men. See a recent volume entitled *Creation by Evolution* for a popular and yet authoritative exposition of the subject.

We have already quoted Dr. James McCosh, president of Princeton College, on this point, and a later president of the institution, Francis L. Patton, in his *Fundamental Christianity* declares that "The doctrine of evolution is not necessarily materialistic. It is quite compatible with theism." And a still later president of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, when asked, "Do you believe in evolution?" answered, "Of course, like every other man of intelligence and education, I do believe in organic evolution. It surprises me that at this late date such questions should be raised."

DANGER OF UNINFORMED OPPOSITION

There is danger to our Christian faith in uninformed opposition to this doctrine now so thoroughly established and universally accepted among scientific men, many of whom are eminent Christians and active in the Christian church. Acceptance of the view has also spread far beyond scientific circles into the general class of educated people, and they are alienated from the church and the ministry when they find church leaders and ministers opposing and denouncing it and generally disclosing their inacquaintance with the subject. The Christian church and cause have grievously suffered much and many times from such opposition to advancing science and truth in all fields, and we ought to be on our guard not to repeat this mistake. Only truth will stand and last and make us free, and it is perilous for Christian leaders to go outside their field and misunderstand and oppose scientific investigation and results.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is science?
2. What is evolution?
3. Give some facts and arguments that support the theory of evolution?
4. Why have so many religious people opposed evolution?
5. What harm may such opposition do?
6. Can any fact of or truth about nature be irreligious?

XVI

WHAT WAS THE ORIGIN OF MAN?

MAN obviously had an origin and how and when it came about is a question for both Scripture and science to answer.

THE ANSWER OF SCRIPTURE

Two outstanding statements comprise almost the whole of Scripture teaching on the subject. In the first, in Genesis 1:26-27, we are told that "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." An important distinction is made in the way God created the lower animals, for he created them "after their kind," but he "created man in his own image." Man was created at a higher level than the beasts of the field, with a new image and a nobler nature. That man now bears the image of God is open to our inspection and experience. We can think of God only in terms of personality endowed with thought, sensibility and moral responsibility, and these are reflected in man as the sun is mirrored in the dewdrop. Man stands in wide distinction from beasts in that he stands upright while they crawl on all fours, and is armed with senses that penetrate into all nooks and crevices and sweep the heavens, while they are limited in the range and power of their senses, and especially does man stand at an enormous and unbridgeable chasm apart from beasts in his mental and moral and spiritual powers.

The other oustanding Scriptural passage, in Genesis 2:7, tells us that "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This passage, while directly attributing to God the creation of man, yet more distinctly and widely separates the creation of man from that of the beasts. A double origin is now ascribed to man, though both processes fall within the divine act of creation. His body was formed of the dust of the ground; there is in him an earthly part that comes up from below in common with the beasts, for all are made of the same dust. But into man Jehovah breathed "the breath of life; and man became a living soul." A spiritual element here comes down from above and constitutes man a spirit, a part that is not given to the beast. The outcome of these statements is that while man comes up out of nature yet he is also above nature, and he stands up in the image of God with an immortal spirit.

The Teaching of Science

We now turn to the teaching of science. Science has been prying into this question for hundreds of years and it has for it as great fascination as it has for religion and ethics. Science finds that man comes up out of the dust and is chemically identical with beasts and also that he is closely related to mammals and anthropoids, bone corresponding with bone, muscle with muscle, nerve with nerve, and blood drop with blood drop. The whole mass and weight of the evidence for biological evolution converges upon and climaxes in man, and here biologists stand agreed. Yet also they know, as how could they help seeing and knowing? that man stands apart in a species by himself and is infinitely above any beast. What brought about this difference science has not yet found out, and in fact it is a question that belongs to philosophy more than to science. Evolutionists are now seeing that there are "leaps" in nature, even Darwin made room in his theory for "sports," which are leaps, and DeVries built his theory of the origin of species on "mutations." Just now, however, biologists are searching in embryology for the secret of this astounding leap in nature when man appeared. Professor William Bateson, an eminent English geneticist, in a notable address delivered on December 21, 1921, before the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Toronto, Canada, maintained that when a new species appears "a new ingredient" has been added to the old stock. This theory is still under investigation, as is the whole process of evolution.

A Divine Inbreathing

"A new ingredient"? What is this but the Scripture teaching itself that God created beasts "after their own kind," but man "in his own image," especially that "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"? Here is an element that came up from below and also an element that came down from above; here is the "new ingredient," "the breath of life" and "living soul" added to the dust of the ground, the old stock. We must thank this eminent biologist for this word. It would appear that biology is now approaching theology and that science and religion, genetics and Genesis, may here be wedded into harmonious and indissoluble union. We leave this solution to the experts, but in the meantime and all the time we rest secure in our confidence that man, however related to the beast, is more than beast and is a son of God. This fact is freely accepted by eminent theologians, such as Dr. James McCosh, who at once saw that evolution could not be stopped at the creation of man but must also enter into this part of the program and process of divine creation. This view, properly understood, detracts nothing from the dignity of man, and, anyway, the only proper inquiry about it is whether it is true.

WHEN WAS MAN CREATED?

This question is one of great interest although only of subordinate if of any importance to religion. Formerly the time of the creation was put back only about six thousand years ago, and Dr. John Lightfoot was able to figure out that man was created on Thursday, October 23, 4004 B.C., at nine o'clock in the morning. However, there is no Scriptural basis for such calculations, and it is sufficient to say that no anthropologist would accept a later date for the appearance of man than upwards of 50,000 years ago, and some of them would go back to a much earlier date. This, however, is still in the lap of science, with no very approximate agreement as to time. We now have a much longer time scale and calendar than our fathers had, and the important thing about the origin of man is not the time but the fact that he came from the hands of God bearing his image as his son.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Is the question of the origin of man of supreme or of subordinate religious importance?
2. What double origin is attributed to man in Scripture?
3. How is science investigating the origin of man?
4. Do science and religion agree in the main as to the physical origin of man?
5. How does science investigate the antiquity of man? Does the Bible say or imply anything on this point?

XVII

WHAT IS MAN?

The nature of anything, especially of any growing thing, is to be discerned in its end rather than in its beginning, in the fruit and not in the root. However man originated, he is a present fact and is to be judged in his own light.

Man the Top of the Creation

Man obviously stands at the top of the creation as we know it, closest to God and most like him in faculty and power. He is endowed with personality, and this fact at once lifts him above the level of nature into the rank of moral beings wearing the high crown of responsibility and character. The constitution of his soul is patterned after his Maker as this is imaged in the work of his hands. The world reflects the three primary powers of intellect, sensibility and will as constituting the fundamental nature of God, and these same faculties unfold in man. His mind grasps the world and reads it as a book, his sensibilities are swept with all rich and various emotions, and his will clothes him with a degree of sovereignty over himself and over the world. These powers combine into personality, of which conscience is the highest office and crown, resulting in a character that is the glory or the shame of man. Standing at the center of the creation, man mounts into dominion over nature, putting his foot on the earth, seizing the stars in his hand, yoking all nature's steeds to his wagons, and shooting his lines of thought and purpose out through the universe to its ultimate frontiers. He is thus a reduced copy of God and parallels him at every point. This divine sonship of man makes him a wonder to himself and leads him to exclaim with Shakespeare, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" and with the psalmist, "Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor." This high view of man is one of the central columns of both science and religion and of a worthy human life.

Man Is a Growth

Man is a growth. The first man was as essentially human as is man to-day, but through what long ages of education he has passed, how much he has grown? He did not start with knowledge and civilization, but at the foot of the ladder down in the lower strata of primitive life in the jungle of nature and at the bottom of savagery where we find his earliest remains to-day. But he was endowed with germinal faculties and boundless possibilities, and slowly and painfully he had to develop these for himself. Not only the centuries of recorded history register this growth but it began far back of this and stretches into the mists of unrecorded time. This process is still going on and apparently more rapidly than ever as we see man going forward by leaps and bounds along every path of exploration and achievement. Yet it still stands true that the first man had essentially the same nature and powers that we possess to-day, only they were latent and waited for development as dormant seeds wait for the summer. God made man an outline sketch, or as a seed or bundle of unpacked powers, and left him to fill out the sketch and unfold himself into the blossom and fruit of his glorious achievements. If we wonder why God did not set man up with a full oufit of knowledge and civilization, morals and religion, the answer is that this would have robbed him of his greatest opportunity and kept him in childhood. Besides, character, the crown of the human soul, cannot be created and put on from without, but must grow up within as the process and product of experience. The centuries are the milestones of man's progress as he has fought his way forward and climbed upward to his present summit of attainment.

Low Views of Man

There are views of man that fall infinitely below this true and worthy evaluation of his nature, and it is one of the ominous symptoms of our day that they are becoming current and pervading much of our popular literature and affecting our life. The worst of these and the one that practically sums up all other unworthy views is that man is only a passing moment in the process of nature, a momentary gleam in the light of a million million suns and will soon be extinguished in the storm and night of eternal oblivion. This degrades man to the level of a beast, if not below it, as it endows him with the powers of a troubled existence that the beast does not have, so that of all creatures he is most miserable. This view at one stroke denies and destroys the responsibility of man, robs him of his power of free will and makes him only a tiny cog in the vast machinery of the world or an atom whirled about in its infinite storm, and discrowns him of conscience and character, giving him only a moment of meaningless existence and then casting him as rubbish to the void.

Practical Consequences

The logical practical consequences of this view is that nothing is worth while, no worthy goal is in sight, all our creeds are withered weeds, all our hopes are liars and our ideals and efforts utterly vain. The next step is to relax all self-restraint and let ourselves go in the false and fatal liberty of "self-expression." By this act we throw the reins down on the neck of our animal nature and bid it go as it will, and then it surely will go the way of wreck and ruin. If we believe we are beasts we shall presently live as beasts and even sink to a lower level than they do and can. In contrast with this low and fatal view of our nature we are to stand upon our feet and assert our sovereignty and exercise our freedom in following and achieving worthy ideals and ends. Our divine sonship, which implies and proclaims divine Fatherhood, is to be given its rightful place and possibilities in our view of our nature and worth. God hath made man upright, and upright we are to stand and not grovel in the dust with beasts of the earth. We are strangely compounded of a lower and a higher nature, and if we let ourselves go our lower instincts will gain the mastery over our higher aspirations and will sink and smother the spirit in the flesh. The sons of man have in them the nature and possibility of becoming in an ever higher degree the sons of God, and this should ever be our ideal and destiny.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. May there be other worlds in which there are creatures higher than man?
2. Are all men created equal, or is manhood subject to degree?
3. Is man inclined to exalt himself too highly in our day?
4 May he also think of himself too meanly?
5. Can we make ourselves grow?
6. How low can man fall?

*

XVIII

WHAT IS SIN?

Low views of man are accompanied with and in part are caused by low views of sin. It has become quite fashionable in some quarters to deny and ridicule "sin," printing the word in quotation marks to express this ill concealed contempt. Yet if there is any fact that stares us in the face and stabs us wide awake it is just this thing, call it what we will. It writes itself in all our social disorders and wrongs and crimes and the very newspapers drip red with it. Human eyes cannot be so blinded that they cannot see its terrible presence and wreck and ruin. The fact of sin lands us in some of the deepest problems and perplexities of our theology.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

The origin of sin is the first difficulty. This difficulty relates to both God and man. Why and how God permitted the entrance of sin into his pure world as it fell fresh from his creative hand is a question that has ever puzzled the human mind. We would have thought that when evil came knocking for admittance into the universe of God, his shoulder would have been against the gate to prevent the dreadful thing from pushing through. But the gate was left free to swing on its hinges, and evil stalked in. The only light we get at this point is in the view that this gate was the creature's own free will and that to lock it would have been to bind and destroy moral agency and responsibility. God had to respect the creature's freedom even in the act of committing the first sin and ushering all its woe into the world. There is also a psychological puzzle on the side of the creature in this act of committing the first sin. We believe that God must have created man upright, and that man sought out many evil inventions: but how did any

instead of humility and reverence. It thus erects itself in rebellion against both man and God at every point of contact. Of course there is a proper self-respect and self-love, and sin is a perversion of this necessary virtue; but it is a perversion and not the virtue itself. Every form of sin is a form of selfishness. Lying perverts the truth in the interest of self, sensuality perverts appetite for its own selfish indulgence, and avarice, ambition, vanity, and pride, are all the self absorbing the world. Even the more spiritual sins of unbelief and self-righteousness are affirmations of the self against the will and righteousness of God. Truth itself may be sought as a personal triumph and thereby become selfishness. Thus all forms of sin run down into selfishness as their taproot.

THE HEREDITY OF SINFUL NATURE

The heredity of sinful nature is the deepest and darkest problem in our theology. Once the race became infected with this virus it propagated itself down through the generations and breathed its blight upon every soul. This fact is open to our inspection and experience and there is no denying it. Yet it has always appeared to be a blinding blow to faith in the justice of God that human beings should be born with a nature or disposition that is sure to sprout into evil. Our relief at this point lies in the direction of the solidarity of the race, with its attendant good as well as evil. Human beings are not independent spirits but units in a social organism, in both the good and the evil of which they must share. Through this channel they inherit the transmitted good of ancestors. The battles of the past thus become their blessings, the victories of other generations become their virtues. It is thus the race gets forward and climbs upward and accumulates a store of wealth as its splendid capital. The price that must be paid for this blessing is its obverse in the taint of evil the stream of heredity also pours down upon us. But this evil stream is modified and checked in that it is limited to "the third and fourth generation," while the heredity of good extends to "a thousand generations"; and heredity does not bind the soul in fatalism, but still leaves a measure of freedom so that no one is condemned and lost for the sins of others but only for his own sins. God also has provided a remedy for all sin and this is the great relief and bow of promise that he has set over against this lost world.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. How can men lead themselves to deny the fact of sin?
2 Is the sense of sin universal in the world?
3. Do all religions recognize it?
4. Show in detail that all sins are selfishness and all selfishness is sin.
5. How can we clear God of complicity with sin in his world?

XIX

IS THE SENSE OF SIN DECLINING?

Some say that it is, but this is a complex question and like all such questions cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. At some points and in some ways the sense of sin is declining and at others it is widening and growing more sensitive.

Some Causes of the Decline

There has been an abatement in the general sense of fear In ancient times the world swarmed with evil demons and nature itself was thickly infested with enemies lurking to pounce upon men. Science has swept these demons out of the world and relieved it of a great terror in Christian countries, and this has had some effect in abating the fear of sin. Extreme views of hell as a literal lake of fire have also faded out of our religion, and men do not fear spiritual retribution as they did literal flames. The character of God has also undergone a change in the changing religious climate and he is no longer painted in such awful colors as are seen in Jonathan Edwards' sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Men do not have the same dread of the Father of our spirits and the God of mercy and love. A changed attitude has also come over our views of sin itself. It has received explanations that explain it away. One theory denies sin outright and resolves it wholly into a traditional illusion and delusion. Determinism in all its forms, psychological and pantheistic, cuts sin up by the roots. Sin thus becomes a misfortune and not a fault, and the sinner is a victim and not an offender. He has not done wrong, but wrong has been done to him. He does not owe God repentance, but God owes him an apology. This view cancels all sense of sin and hardens the heart against it. The corrective of this error is an appeal to and affirmation of our intuitional sense of free agency and responsibility, a responsibility that is affirmed in all the laws and is reflected in all the literatures of the world and that rolls its solemn voice through all ages.

Causes Working to Widen and Deepen the Sense of Sin

On the other hand, in the midst of these ominous conditions and changes we are developing a broader and finer ethical sense. While some things that in former days were regarded as deep sins, such as dancing and the theater, are losing their darker aspects and are fading out into general tolerance if not acceptance among Christian people, other things that former generations did not consider wrong are now pressing on our conscience as grave social sins. Slavery, once thought right and even defended as a divine institution, is now swept from Christendom as "the sum of all villainies." Gambling, once a gentleman's game, is now banished from most respectable circles. Intemperance, once indulged in without social or religious disapproval, is now a grave sin and scandal.

Even more significant is the growth in conscience in the political, business and industrial worlds. Politics is undoubtedly subject to higher ethical standards than in former days and is growing cleaner and more honest and honorable. Public opinion appears to be growing purer and more powerful. Business and industrial legislation is making constant progress along ethical lines. A great body of legislation is growing up regulating trusts and monopolies, child labor and the labor of women, the hours of labor, protection from dangerous machinery and unsanitary conditions, and much more, all of which mark and measure progress in social conscience. While individual conscience at some points is growing less tender, social conscience is growing more sensitive and imperative. The sense of truth is also growing finer and more exacting. The scientific spirit of fact-finding and truth-seeking is pervading our whole intellectual and moral life and the Christian spirit of brotherhood is being diffused through our social order from top to bottom.

Broader and more hopeful still, there is developing a world consciousness and a world conscience. The world, once broken and dissevered into constantly warring fragments, is growing into unity and forming a court of world morality in which its ethical sense is steadily moving up the scale of worth and obligation. Humanity is beginning to realize its brotherhood and to speak on international questions with a majestic voice. And this is true in spite of the late Great War and the still disturbed condition of the world. At any rate there is a growing conscience against war which was scarcely felt five centuries or even one century ago, and the world appears to be moving toward the long dreamed of "parliament of man and federation of the world." And thus conscience is developing a broader and finer sense of right and wrong, and this is an immensely hopeful and the most hopeful fact in our world.

The Fact of Sin Remains

The final fact on this subject is that notwithstanding the sense of sin has declined at some points, the terrible reality of sin remains. Some of these conditions that have dulled our sense of sin are reactions against the extremes of other days and will swing back to a normal position; others are less serious than they seem, and still others are a positive and great gain. But in and through them all the fact of sin has not been eradicated from human nature. No self-deception can permanently blind the soul to its guilt. Conscience cries out against itself and its voice cannot be hushed. Sin is still the most frightful fact in our world and writes its ruin in a thousand ways. It is the awful tragedy of the universe, and only fools mock at it. Hell cannot be dug out of the cosmic constitution or its fires be quenched. God cannot overlook sin and be a respectable God. The integrity of the universe will not tolerate it. God will not let it mock him, and it is still an eternal law of life that the wages of sin is death.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is sin?
2. What part has the gospel itself had in modifying erroneous views about sin and God?
3. In casting out old views must we be careful not to cast out with them the truth that is in them?
4. Name other ways in which our modern sense of right and wrong is being developed.
5. Are social sins more grave than personal and are all sins social?

XX

WHAT IS RELIGION?

There are "ten thousand definitions of religion," we are told, and this is not surprising as it is a large and many sided matter with a multitude of forms and creeds, and it is too varied and complex, atmospheric and elusive to be caught and confined in any rigid cage of words. In fact, anyone's idea or experience of religion will shape his own definition of it, and as no two persons can have the same identical experience of any subject, there will be as many definitions of religion as there are religious persons. Yet there must be some element common to all these definitions and experiences, and this is found in the fact that every religion worthy of the name expresses the relation of men to what they regard as supernatural powers; and as we have in view in these discussions the Christian religion we may define it as our conscious relation to God, and, more definitely, as our conscious relation to God in Christ.

Religion a Practical Necessity

Religion is not a human invention but a natural and necessary activity of human nature. Men did not first think about religion and then begin to live religiously, but they first instinctively lived religiously and then began to think about it and form religious cults and creeds. It is not a conscious creation but an unconscious instinct and growth. As men lived in the sunlight ages before they studied astronomy, and cultivated the soil long before they studied agriculture, so they worshiped God ages before they so much as thought about theology. The religious nature is as ineradicable in man as his mental and physical, and therefore he is naturally and incorrigibly religious. The priest and church did not make religion, but religion made the priest and the church. Religion is the only sufficient ground of a worthy life and is a universal and practical necessity in our human world. This religious nature is the primary ground of preaching and religious education, the fertile soil with which we start, and it gives reality and faith and courage to all our work in this field.

Rooted in Every Part of Our Nature

Religion is constitutionally rooted in every part of our nature. It wells up out of our intuitions and instincts, the deep bases of our nature that lie below our consciousness as foundations root themselves far down below the soil in primal rock. It is rooted in all our emotions, such as dependence, fear, wonder, value, obligation, beauty, loyalty, and love. These feelings are the oldest part of our nature that first emerge in life and all carry religion up into our conscious life. It is rooted in the intellect, for man is a thinker and cannot keep his brain from sprouting. When these religious needs and activities come up before the bar of his reason he is able to confirm and vindicate them by all the facts and processes of the world. He finds the world intelligible and at every point it manifests a supreme Mind and Heart. It is also rooted in the will, for man is made for action and all his powers urge him into activity and achievement, and the greater the idea and ideal that captures his will the greater the need and urgency that he strive to attain it. Religion is man's greatest idea and it dominates his life as with the mountains of eternity and bids him put forth his utmost faith and effort and sacrifice that he may climb its slope toward its summit where he reaches his highest and best and stands crowned with eternal life. Religion can no more be shut up in one's private thoughts than can his honesty or his love, but it is expansive and social and pervades and fills the whole field of life.

RELIGION AS LIFE

Religion is not only a subjective and private experience, but is also a social and public life. It not only goes into the closet and closes its door, but it also comes out into the open and lives and serves among men in all their fields and activities. Religion is related to our common life as the sky to the landscape, pouring down upon it sunshine and showers that clothe it with verdure and beauty and cause it to spring into bloom and fruitage. Being a spirit of life, religion is pervasive of all our life, controlling and molding and transfiguring it with the indwelling Spirit of God. Ideally, no part of our life can escape its penetrating, purifying and transforming presence and power. It gives meaning to our life, lifting it into divine worth and touching it with eternal issues. It undergirds our life with strength and inspires it with vision and courage that carry it as on wings into a victorious life. It enlists in a campaign of service and goes forth to Christianize the world and rebuild it into the kingdom of God on earth.

Religion as Group Growth and Life

Religion is a social process and product, a group growth and life. The human being in its entire personality is a social product. It could not develop into a human person in perfect isolation from its human environment. Human society is the mold in which the plastic and almost fluid human infant is cast and crystallized. It absorbs its environmental influences as a seed absorbs the sunshine and rain and elements of the soil. Nurture largely molds nature. Our food and clothing, speech and accent, manners and customs, all the outer forms of our civilization; and much deeper matters of disposition and habit, beliefs and ideals, politics and religion, all group interests and "folkways" are largely bred in us and imposed upon us by the social group in which we are born and grow and by which we are unconsciously molded. Religion is subject to this process as much as anything else and it enters profoundly into our religious education.

Religion is thus one of the most universal and pervasive and powerful facts in our world. All our faculties feel after and fasten their filaments on God and wrap themselves around him and cling to him so close and tight that they refuse to be torn loose. The whole human world is one great cry for God that has filled all the ages, and it will never be stilled and satisfied until his fullness

> Flows around our incompleteness,
> Round our restlessness his rest.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. How does it come that there are so many definitions of religion?
2. Would religion survive without any creed and church?
3. Can we find any people or person wholly without religion?
4. What use is religion?
5. Why are not more people or all people openly and actively religious?
6. How can we express and intensify our religious life?

XXI

CAN THERE BE RELIGION WITHOUT A GOD?

There are those that answer this question in the affirmative and some have organized churches or societies that meet and carry on what they call worship and yet have no belief in God.

Definition of Term

In such a case everything depends on the definitions of the terms used. Religion is a historical word running far back through many ages and civilizations and long usage has established its meaning as being our relation to God, however the term God may be defined. Historically religion has never remained tethered to the earth but has always taken wings for a flight into the infinite and eternal. It will be said, however, Are there not great pantheistic religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, that have no personal God and yet can we deny them the name of religion when more human beings hold to them than to any other religion in the world? At first sight this does seem to negative the idea that religion involves a relation to God, but this view largely dissolves under closer inspection. The pantheism of Hinduism is a vast system of millions of gods, and Buddhism expresses itself in countless personal images.

However the theory of pantheism may renounce a personal deity yet practically it cannot keep from relapsing into it with the result that it goes to excess in the very thing it sets out to deny and has too many gods.

WHAT RELIGION WITHOUT GOD INVOLVES

It is important to consider what religion without God involves. It cuts up by the roots practically all the needs and hopes and forms of worship that have almost universally entered into the very life and breath of religion. Any relation of communion with God, such as prayer and praise and the whole system of worship, utterly fails and if it is maintained becomes a senseless irrationality. How can anyone in any sober and serious sense and state of mind pray when there is no belief in God that can hear and answer? This is only a make-believe that simply troubles the air in vain, and when its true nature is discovered it can hardly continue. It may be practiced for a while as a soliloquy or a meditation or a speech addressed to hearers, but even this in time will cease to be a rational performance and will lose respect with all concerned in it. So with praise and with all aspiration and higher ideas and ideals that reach above this world. They are left without any objective, hanging loosely in the air without any support and will inevitably fall, as though the strand of gravitation that holds the earth in its orbit were left unsupported in the heavens instead of being solidly rooted in the sun.

Another fundamental element of religion is belief in immortality and this also utterly perishes along with prayer and praise. The soul is only a passing state of the body, a peculiar chemical compound or activity, and at death ceases as a soul and passes into the general stream of nature. This is just the same as any theory of extinction that utterly obliterates any personal survival and sinks the soul in eternal oblivion. The effect of this view is to cancel any worthy religion and make all its faith and hopes and exercises a meaningless mockery. Then religion, whatever we may conceive it to be, loses pragmatic value and "makes no difference" in the final outcome and sum of things. It is only a way of deluding ourselves which an honest mind will reject as soon as it finds out its true nature.

In short, religion without God cancels all the values of religion by depriving them of their real basis of fact and worth and reducing them to empty and delusive dreams which cannot be cherished when their true nature is discovered. Spiritual values, the worth of the soul, the nature of character and conscience and conduct, the fact of free will and personal responsibility, the problem of sin and the need of forgiveness and cleansing, the need of a Higher Power if not Person on whom we can depend, a Lord to save us and a Friend to guide and love us—these and all related values and needs and hopes fail and fall with our belief in God and we are only children crying in the night with no language but a fruitless cry.

HUMANISM

But is there not now a form of religion called "Humanism" that is actually in operation with some organization and services, and can we deny sincerity to this form of faith? We do not, but are always willing to respect any sincere form of professed religion, however far from our faith it may be. Even Paul did this when he adopted the poor dumb idol of the Athenians as a stepping-stone up into his higher faith, a dim torch to lead his hearers into the true Light. Humanism is a word which properly relates to any philosophy or view that emphasizes interest in man and was one aspect of the Reformation. It is, then, not wrong when it is adopted as a name for a religion that confines its vision and practice wholly to the level of our human world. As such, also, it emphasizes a very vital side of religion, for when any form of religion, however orthodox it otherwise may be, withdraws from our human world and becomes absorbed and lost in divine doctrines and abstractions, it also vacates the right to the name religion, which is a human relation to the divine, and the one of these terms is just as vital and necessary as the other. Much as we may respect those that are attempting to establish religion on the basis of a pure humanism, we believe they are building on the sand and their house cannot stand. They may make a brave attempt to keep their conscience and courage up, they may for the time exhibit as pure morals as any others, but the logic of the human mind and the ineradicable yearnings and demands of the human heart will destroy their attempt to find a halfway footing for religion and either send them plunging to the bottom of despair and worldliness or inspire them to climb upward toward the worship of the true and living God. The world has seen such cults in countless numbers and their little torches soon burn out; they have their day and cease to be. Humanism may call itself a religion, but its right to do so is questionable and some of its advocates refuse to do this and call it by some such name as ethical culture.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why is it important to define our terms?
2. Can we keep the light after we put out the lamp?
3. What are good points in humanism?
4. What are its fatally weak points?
5. What is essential to true religion?

XXII

WHAT ARE SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY?

We group these three subjects together for brief definition and discrimination, as the failure to do this properly results in much misunderstanding and controversy in the field of religion.

SCIENCE

Science is a systematic body of knowledge on any subject. It aims to gather all the facts in its field, arrange and classify them into order, deduce their causal connections and laws, and trace them back to their origin and forecast their future. Such knowledge is the inevitable outgrowth of the constitution of the mind and is the necessary means of the increasing mastery of nature and of all the material conditions of life.

In a narrower sense science is the knowledge of the physical world, and this is usually its meaning when we speak of the relations and especially the conflicts between science and religion. Its main fields are astronomy and geology, chemistry, physics and biology, although these overlap with and run into other sciences. In these fields science studies observational facts or phenomena, things that can be seen and measured. It does not go beyond these limits and stops at the boundary of such inquiries as the underlying cause and meaning of the world. It studies proximate but not ultimate causes. It does not deny such causes and the scientist may be deeply interested in them, but they are not his field and cannot be reached by his methods. For example, the biologist studies the facts that he interprets as progressive development or evolution, but he has nothing to say as a biologist as to the underlying cause of the process: this belongs to the field of philosophy. It is just at this point that much confusion arises in the relations between science and religion. The religious believer when he hears of the doctrine of evolution is apt to suppose that it is a form of materialism and therefore destructive of all religion. But this is a mistake due to the failure to note the distinction between science and philosophy. Science deals only with the facts as they are seen in the rocks and are woven into the whole web of life and says nothing about the ultimate cause that is producing the vast fabric of the universe. Strictly, science gives us but one aspect of the world, its "metric aspect," or a cross-section of it along the lines of measurement, and there it stops without in the least denying that there are other and still deeper aspects.

PHILOSOPHY

At this point or line of delimitation the philosopher steps in and gives his interpretation of the universe. He does not deny or overlook the phenomenal facts and results of the scientist: in fact, he adopts and uses them as the basis of his own further study. But he passes beyond the limit of the phenomenal into the noumenal or into the region of ultimate reality. He inquires into the fundamental principles and laws that must underlie and give birth to and explain the whole web of appearances that make up our common world. He uses no telescopes or microscopes, no test tubes or chemical reactions, but he tries to think his way by logical steps into these ultimate questions and reach results that will give rationality and meaning to the universe as a whole and discover its ultimate nature. Philosophy is not a mere play of the fancy or a spinning of the web of the world out of one's own bowels, but is just a desperate attempt to think more clearly and consistently. Right or wrong in its results, it is aiming at a right and necessary thing if we are to be rational to the utmost. The philosophers arrive at different views or systems, such as materialism and pantheism and agnosticism, or idealism and theism, and these ultimate conclusions are what give trouble to religious believers and some of them undoubtedly wreck and destroy any spiritual interpretation of the world and leave no room for religious faith and life. Keeping this distinction clearly in mind will save us from much misunderstanding at this point. It is not evolution as a doctrine of science that endangers faith, but some false philosophy of evolution that destroys it, and often the opponent of evolution is out after the wrong man.

Theology

Theology is the science of God and his relations to the world. It seeks to gather all the facts of all fields and interprets them into consistency and finds them to be stepping-stones on the great altar of the world leading up to God. It uses both science and philosophy and seeks to focus their light on the existence of God and his relations to the world. It roots itself down in the same foundations of reality as all other sciences and is subject to the same laws of development and study as other fields. It asks no favors in this respect from other sciences on the ground of its sacredness but comes out into the open and subjects all its facts and doctrines and documents to the most rigid scientific tests. As against any materialistic or pantheistic or agnostic philosophy it presents and asserts the indubitable facts of the spirit, of human consciousness and conscience, and of the meaning of the world as along all lines of study it leads up to a personal God. It is the oldest science and still holds its own and grows with the growth of all the sciences as it adopts their results and builds them into its own temple of truth and worship. In particular, theology is subject to the scientific spirit, which is the pure love and search for truth wherever it may be found and whatever it may turn out to be. It has no dark closet or secret methods in which it seeks to hide from growing truth, but it bares its breast and throws open the doors of its mind unafraid to any wind or storm that blows and welcomes every discovery of truth.

Science, philosophy and theology are thus three adventures of the human spirit into the universe seeking to reach its frontiers and discover its ultimate secret. They are not unfriendly and competitive, much less antagonistic, in their spirit and aims, but are coöperative and ultimately harmonious, however at points their several interpreters may differ and fall foul of each other. They are constructive builders of one grand temple of worship, concordant strains of one vast cosmic symphony and song.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What use is science?
2. Why is there prejudice against science in some religious circles?
3. Of what use is philosophy?
4. Does every one have some kind of philosophy in his thinking?
5. Is theology necessary to religion?
6. Why is doctrinal preaching unpopular?
7. To what are "conflicts" between science and theology due?

XXIII

CAN OUR RELIGION AND OUR SCIENCE LIVE TOGETHER?

RELIGION and science started together under the same ancestral roof, but as they went out each along its own special path of investigation they became separated, and when they come back to the old home they may find themselves in fratricidal strife. Yet they are both ways of interpreting the same world and must have deep unities and, when they properly understand each other, live together in harmony.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING THE WORLD

We need to see clearly that religion and science are special ways of knowing the world. We may know any object intellectually as we apprehend its factual relations, esthetically in its esthetical aspects, and morally in its moral nature. Science studies the world in its factual relations and its proper field are phenomena; religion studies the world in its moral and spiritual relations and penetrates deeper into its underlying nature or ontological cause. The religious study of the world predominantly apprehends values and the scientific study apprehends phenomenal facts. Both are legitimate and must have their rights respected.

While they overlap and involve each other at various points and ways, yet their fields are also distinct and each has authority in its own field which it cannot dogmatically impose on the other. When these mutual relations and rights are understood, religion and science will not collide but will coalesce in the deeper unity of the common reality that underlies them both.

Universality of Law

This general solution seems to encounter difficulties at special points and two of these will here be briefly examined. One of these is the modern scientific doctrine of the universality of physical law. Does not this reduce the world to mechanism, leaving no room for free will and moral responsibility and personality? Does it not resolve conscience and character and conduct into chemical compounds and physiological functions? Two answers meet this objection. For one thing the universality of physical law remains to be proved. Does it hold in the biological world of life? Biologists are divided. But recent physics has announced a startling discovery that while physical law holds outside the atom in matter in the mass, it does not hold inside the atom in electrons and protons. These appear to move in ways of their own that cannot be predicted and look wonderfully like the activity of will. This might open a door into the physical world that would make abundant room for human free will.

However a surer answer is that the universal reign of physical does not in the least destroy our own free will, for we can direct and combine physical laws so as to work out our own purposes. We are constantly doing this in all our bodily activities and in the vast world of industry and machinery in which we are directing all streams of energy into our channels to turn our wheels and effect all our purposes; yet we are no more hindered in our freedom by these laws than is the locomotive by the steel rails that bind it in its track: the track does not limit the freedom of the locomotive but gives it all the freedom it has; when it jumps the track its freedom of movement is done. We are ourselves supernatural beings in that we operate in and yet above nature and use it as our nimble and powerful servant while yet we do not violate but only direct its laws. This opens a wide door for human freedom and divine miracle and all the supernaturalism we need and can use.

The Vastness of the Universe

Another apparent scientific objection to harmony between our science and religion is the inconceivable vastness of the universe that has in modern times been disclosed to us. The facts of these astronomic discoveries have been popularized and are more or less familiar even to the man on the street. Our own universe or galaxy is now known to be a flattened circular mass or disk of several billion stars of such width that it takes the light several hundred thousand years to cross it from edge to edge while it is something like thirty or forty thousand light-years thick, a vast spin-wheel of stars slowly revolving on its axis requiring one or more hundred million years for a revolution around a center now located in the constellation Sagittarius. More astounding still there are multitudes of spiral nebulæ at a distance of a million or millions of light-years from us that are now resolved into other galaxies or "island universes" that compare in size with our own. The speeds of these stars and especially of the spiral nebulae mount up into hundreds and even thousands of miles a second, and the diameters of some stars that have been measured show they are millions of times the size of our sun. The outmost rim of this total cosmos has not been reached and yet it is believed to be a self-inclosed finite unity.

Now where does such a universe leave man? Does it not reduce him to utter nothingness in size and value and does it not render difficult if not impossible belief in a God? However staggering this thought may be at first, it begins to fade and lose its terror under examination. The cure for troubled thought is always more thought. Who is it that measures this universe and determines all these distances and sizes and speeds? Man himself, and thereby he becomes greater than the cosmos he measures. The greater the universe is, the greater is man who stands amidst all its starry splendors and recreates them in his brain and subjects them to the laws of his mind. And by so much, also, the greater is God. Did not the psalmist begin to lose faith as he contemplated the starry night and asked, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" His faith is slipping, but instantly he recovers it better than ever, "For thou hast made him but little lower than God." Now his faith is back with a better estimate of man and a truer thought of God. Our religion can live with modern science and grow stronger than ever; and many, if not most, scientific men are also religious and Christian in faith.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What trouble did the Copernican astronomy give theology in its day?
2. What collision arose between Genesis and geology?
3. Did the same trouble arise over evolution?
4. Have these problems all been adjusted into harmonious relations?
5. Are eminent scientific men generally religious and Christian in faith?

XXIV

WHAT ARE MIRACLES?

Miracles have ever been a storm center of Christianity. They were attended with disputation and denial when they occurred, and controversy has ever since raged around them. Yet belief in them has not been overthrown, and they stand as a central column in the fabric of our historic faith.

Miracles in Relation to Natural Law

The first and fundamental difficulty encountered by miracles is their relation to natural law. All advance in science extends the area of law, and this process has covered the universe and shown that it is a law-saturated system in which no atom ever gets out of place, no star ever shoots a forbidden ray. Miracles at first sight look like "a violation of the laws of nature," and such a phrase was long a theological definition of miracles, and it still sets forth a popular conception of them. The growth and prestige of science have forced an abandonment of this view and led to a reconstruction of the idea of the supernatural. Many definitions have been given of it, but the general idea now held is that a miracle is an event in the physical world not explainable by known physical causes, which manifests a worthy purpose and is to be regarded as a special act of the divine will. Viewed in this light a miracle escapes many of the old objections urged against it. The human will itself can cause events that are analogous to miracles. It can combine and direct physical forces to its own ends, and thus produce events in the physical world that nature itself would never have caused, and such events are of the same kind as miracles. God sustains the same relation to physical forces, only his immanence in them and control over them are more intimate and complete; rather these forces are simply his own will as directed by his thought and thus immediately express his purpose. He can therefore combine and direct these forces to work out his purpose at any point without violating any law. These forces may be viewed as his habits which he can modify when there is a reason for such variation. The immanence of God in his world makes it pliant and plastic at every point to express his purpose, and thus the supernatural is as natural with him as that which is natural with us. This modern philosophic view of the world undermines the old objection to miracles and brings them within the curve of unbroken higher law and love.

THE BACKGROUND OF PURPOSE

The question of the reality of the Biblical miracles thus reduces to one of historic fact. A vital matter in establishing an historic event is its background of purpose. Does it fit into the general framework of history and fulfill a purpose as a key fits into a lock or does it refuse to match other events and remain a refractory and irrational thing? This general principle bears strongly on the credibility of an event and is often decisive in itself. It is a knife that cuts up by the roots most of the alleged miracles that have infested the history of religion and that still occur in spurious forms of faith. But the supernatural element in Christianity bears this decisive test. There is a tremendous need and call for miracles in the world. Its harmony with God has been broken by the separating and disorganizing fact of sin, and this fact, while it is not the foundation of religion, is yet the foundation of a redemptive religion. Was there not plainly some need that God should come to man in special manifestation so as to gain his confidence and his love? This is the background of the Incarnation, itself the supreme miracle, and of all the Biblical miracles: they are called for and justified as special acts and means of a redemptive religion.

The miracles of the Bible fit into this general purpose. They are comparatively rare, intervene at the right points and then cease. The idea that the Bible swarms with miracles is a mistake: they are few in number, even when they are thickest as in the life of Jesus. Miracles did not drip from his fingers, but he used them sparingly and reluctantly. The character of these miracles also is in keeping with their divine origin and purpose. They are never mere wonders or spectacular events, but are dignified and sober. They are essential illustrations and parts of his teaching. Each miracle is wrought for a definite purpose and this is illustrative of his teaching and mission. He feeds the multitude, not simply to appease their hunger, but also and chiefly to lead them to the Bread of Life. The two great miracles by which he effected a unique entrance into and exit from our life are buttresses upon which rest his divinity and work. His miracles are not all of equal significance and value, and the resurrection has ever been regarded as the central column that sustains his divinity and makes belief in his other miracles easy.

ARE THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO CHRISTIANITY?

The question whether the miracles of Christ are necessary to his divine character and mission and whether belief in them is essential to Christianity is one that is constantly pressing upon us and is growing more urgent. The tendency to abandon miracles and hold to the divine character and work of Christ appears to be growing. But the Christian church universal has never yielded to this tendency and stands immovably upon the rock of the resurrection of Christ, which carries with it the general structure of the supernatural in his person and work. Christ himself unmistakably claimed to have and to exercise miraculous power, and we cannot reject this claim and yet keep our faith in him; and if we take the miracles out of his life and out of the Gospels the Bible as a whole will be so perforated and torn to pieces and rendered meaningless that it could not hold its place in our faith. Such portions of the general Christian community as have abandoned the miracles cannot stop at this point and go on to cut loose from the whole historical substance and meaning of Christianity and they sink into a relatively insignificant factor in Christian faith and life. Christianity itself would certainly in time be shorn of its meaning and power, if it were emasculated of its supernatural skeleton and spinal column and be reduced to the impotence of a natural religion and ethical cult, and in time would be blown away as dust in the winds of the centuries.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is natural law?
2. In what ways are natural laws subject to our will?
3. What makes an historical event rational?
4. Are all the miracles of the Bible of equal importance?
5. To what degree are the miracles of Christ essential to his gospel?

XXV

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

CHRISTIANITY has been charged with being the religion of a book, and this charge is nothing against it but stands in its favor, for books are the greatest things in the world. Books are boats loaded with cargoes of ideas, the most valuable goods and vital wealth of the human spirit. They come floating down the stream of time, it may be from distant days and far lands and various climes, and bring us freight infinitely more precious than the silks of India, or the spices of Araby, or all the ivory and diamonds and gold of Africa. Yet are they so plentiful and cheap that no one is so poor but may be rich in this treasure.

THE BIBLE THE GREATEST AND BEST BOOK

Of all the books in the world the Bible is incomparably the greatest and best. It was slowly produced, as diamonds are secreted and crystallized atom by atom, through a thousand years at the convergent and crowded crossroads of the ancient world where all civilizations and languages and religions met and flowed into it. Not only was Palestine compressed into its pages, but so also were Babylon and Egypt and Greece and Rome. All the world was taxed and rifled of its treasures to compose and enrich it. A great many-sided literature of the religiously most gifted people, it is the expressed essence of their history and experience. Historian and prophet, psalmist and poet emblazoned its pages with their pictures of the march of God through time, leading obedient nations or tossing impenitent ones out of his path, and with the most glorious visions and colors of their inspired imagination. The Hebrew was the most richly endowed child of God, and yet also the most willful and wayward and passed through the deepest waters and the fiercest storms. He poured his burning, throbbing soul into this book so that it flames with his ardent dreams and hopes, is jubilant with its joyous triumphs, stained with his sins and tears, darkened with his tragedies, and sobs and his sorrows.

Varied and Picturesque

No other book is so varied and picturesque and colorful, so surcharged and saturated with the distilled essence of human nature, so woven of the very palpitating fibers of the human soul. It is at once the most human and most divine book in all the vast library of the world's books. It has accumulated meaning and value with the ages; and like an old rose jar it will ever retain and emit its precious divine aroma; out of its ancient moss-covered rock will ever gush forth living streams of life. It has been and is the most prolific soil and seed-bed of other books, and out of it have grown vast forests of literature. It can never pass out of human interest and become obsolete, any more than can the majesty of mountains and the mystery of the sea, the beauty of the Parthenon, the plays of Shakespeare, or the soul of Lincoln. It is rooted in the religious nature of man and will ever endure as one of the permanent and perennial interests and values of our human world.

The Bible a Growth

The Bible is a growth. It was not written all at once, in one age, or by one author, but was given "at sundry times and in divers manners." It is a great national literature and library that grew through the ages. From Moses, its first writer, to John the evangelist, who probably wrote its closing page, its growth stretches through something like fifteen hundred years. Through all this long period it maintained a continuous history and development, adding book to book and doctrine to doctrine. Its history is a logical unfolding from the creation to the call of Abraham, where the general world history was narrowed to the point of one person and people, and on down to the fullness of time when the hour struck for the Incarnation, and then through the dispersion of the universal religion out over the world. It starts with rudimentary religious ideas and ethics and germinal doctrines. Private and social practices were at first permitted that were in time outgrown and pronounced out of date. The morals of one age became immoral in the next. The slavery and polygamy sanctioned by Moses were in time condemned and swept away by Christ. God spoke to men in clearer words with larger meanings only as they were able to bear them; and still much revelation he has in store for us because we are not able to bear it yet. The early parts of the Bible were primers and first grade readers to lead the people on to deeper views and loftier visions. Its first pages are dim in many doctrines that on its later pages burst into radiant light. This fact of the growth of the Bible plays an important part in its interpretation. It is not all of equal value, some of it has become obsolete, and we must distinguish between such parts as were local and temporary and such parts as are universal and permanent.

The Bible a Divine Book

The Bible is a divine book in a degree that separates it from all other books and literatures in the world. It is true, there is a divine element in other literatures, but this element in the Bible is unique and unapproachable. It is not easy to separate and define this divine element, just as it is not easy to draw the dividing line between the divine and the human in providence and in our own consciousness. But it is there as a distinct outstanding fact, or as a flame that burns all the way through, or as a relish that is found in all its pages. We see this divinity in the plan and purpose that shaped its history and unfold in the Bible from its first to its last page. We see it in its doctrinal development that proceeds from germ to fruit through all its growth. We see it in its great personalities, its creative geniuses, statesmen, leaders, prophets, and poets who directed human history to divine ends and were mountain peaks that caught light from heaven. We see it with increasing clearness in the gospels and epistles where this divine flame burns and its light shines out in purest splendor. We see its supreme manifestation and proof in him who was the Light of the world and spake as never man spake. The Bible is earthly clay fused with heavenly flame, human flesh filled with divine spirit. The breath of God is blowing through this book and nothing else will explain it.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What would the world be without books?
2. Do all religions have sacred books?
3. In what sense is the Bible a national literature?
4. Trace through the Bible some lines of development.
5. In what sense is the Bible a unity?
6. What are evidences of a divine element in the Bible?

XXVI

IS IT RIGHT TO STUDY THE BIBLE?

THE answer must be in the affirmative, for any denial or restriction of the right to study the Bible would expose the book or rather expose us to ridicule in our day. Even reading the book is so far a study and interpretation of it and the book itself urges us to search it and see if these things are so.

Subject to All Laws of Study

While it is a plain book and its larger practical meanings lie on its surface so that "he may run that readeth it," yet it is subject to all the needs and processes and laws of the study of books. Its languages must be translated and interpreted in accordance with the rules of lexicography and grammar, just as any other book is understood, and this is a scholar's work that only trained experts can do for us. So also its history and customs must be investigated and reconstructed so that they will live in our imagination, as we reproduce any other history. The dates and authorship of its books must be determined in accordance with the laws of historical evidence, and this also is the work of special scholars. Its doctrines must be studied from their first germs to their full blossom and final fruit. And all this work must be repeated and its results revised as our general and special knowledge of the book grows. All this is just common sense and a practical necessity without which the Bible would be a closed or a magical book to us that no one could intelligently use or respect.

Scientific Investigation

This whole work must be carried on under the strictest, most impartial and most thorough processes of scientific investigation. The sacred claims and character of the book cannot be permitted to draw around it any hedge of protection or throw over it any robe of special privilege or favoritism. It cannot be put under a glass case and a warning issued that scholars and investigators are not to touch this holy ark or shrine. It must come out into the open and expose itself to the most pitiless and even hostile search and test. Every fact in it must be put to the proof of the strongest critical acid and flame; no fact or doctrine is so sacred that it must not go through the fire of investigation. Its own principle and bidding must be followed that we must search all things and hold fast only that which is true and good. This study should not be prejudged or hampered by any antisupernaturalistic presuppositions, and it should be carried on in a spirit of reverence and sympathy with spiritual ideals. In this respect it calls for the same right that any work of literature or art should have of being judged in the light of sympathetic understanding.

Constructive Results

This study has been going on through all the Christian centuries, but it has assumed scientific form mainly within the last hundred years. It has created a vast literature and worked out many solid and illuminating results. Of course, it has been attended with many mistakes and vain speculations and temporary vagaries, but its purpose has been sincere and honest and its main results are not destructive but constructive. In particular the facts as to the origin and authorship of its books have been discovered and traditional views modified. The traditional view has been that these facts have been certainly known from ancient times. Even the statements of authorship given in the titles and the English titles at that of its various books have been taken at their face value as though they were inspired along with the books themselves. The simple fact that in the English Bible the first book is named "The First Book of Moses Called Genesis" was taken as an authoritative declaration of the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and on the same ground of the whole Pentateuch and so with many other books of the Bible. When it became known that these titles generally are not in the original manuscripts and are no part of the books but are later additions by unknown editors or scribes, this was seen to be a revolutionary fact that swept away many traditional views as to their authorship and threw the whole question of their origin open to investigation. It was further seen that few books of the Bible announce their authorship and this again opened the question of their origin. And so historical investigation has gone through the books of the Bible endeavoring to discover their authorship and order of production, the environment and circumstances of their time and the purpose of their authors in writing them. Involved in the same process has been the question of the accuracy and trustworthiness of the authors as tested by modern methods. This criticism has resulted after more than a hundred years of study in general agreement among scholars as to the main facts, and this critical knowledge has become popularized so that it is widely diffused, and it has largely shaped our modern views of the Bible.

A Better Book Than Ever

The Bible in our judgment comes out of the modern critical study as good a religious book as ever—and far better. We now know that we are not trusting it blindly on the ground of its sacredness, but are putting our faith in it in the full light of our scientific investigation. Anyway, there is no escaping this investigation and its results. The Bible is on trial in our day as never before and the only way to vindicate it is to tell the truth about it. We try to hide it from the light and keep it immune from publicity at its peril. Special pleading and misrepresentation and shouting will not save it. Such methods have lost standing in the scholarly world and are not respectable. The worst thing we can do with the Bible is to envelop it in a fog of obscurantism and hope thus to keep it untouched by scholarly study. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light," and this is true of the Bible. It shows no fear or hesitation itself in the presence of such study but welcomes it and urges it on, and .when we follow this method we see that our modern knowledge and conceptions of the book have not impaired, much less destroyed, its religious value, but have brought the book nearer to facts and truth and thereby have brought it closer to our own bosoms and business. We can now say more significantly than ever before, "The opening of thy words giveth light."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Can we keep from studying the Bible?
2. Why is there some prejudice against studying the Bible as we study other books?
3. Can we find out the most important things about the Bible from the Bible itself?
4. What is "the higher criticism"?
5. What are some of the views about the Bible critical study has changed?
6. Has the critical study of the Bible made it a better book for us?
7. Does the Bible itself urge us to study it?

XXVII

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Our Bible falls into two parts, named the Old and New Testaments. This is a very significant fact about the book embedded in its very structure. The two parts are widely different in nature and contents and are even sundered by several centuries of time. It will be well to evaluate them separately.

The Old Testament Is Old

The most distinctive thing about the Old Testament is that it is old. It moves through ancient times and is fashioned out of the languages and customs, the history and ideas of its day. As a result it in no small degree has become obsolete and been left behind. It "has waxed old" and is now "done away." It is like the stratified rocks under our feet that are full of fossils which once were living forms but are now dead and turned to stone. It is so viewed and treated by Jesus. He revised it at many points and brought it up to date. He recast its teachings in his own forms of thought and molded it to his own purpose. Much of it did not suit him at all and he sloughed off these obsolete and incongruous materials and selected what fit in with his own teaching. Deeper and more radical still, he did not hesitate to challenge its teaching and authority and he boldly corrected Scripture (see p. 170). Six times he does this in the Sermon on the Mount and all the way through his teaching he put himself above the Old Testament and brought it up to the level of his own light and life.

But It Is Still Useful

But the fact that the Old Testament is old, while it modifies, yet it does not destroy its usefulness. Even the old fossilized rocks under our feet bear us up and sustain our buildings and are weathered into rich soil for new growth. Our forests and all our vegetation root themselves down in these ancient rocks and draw from them new life and fruit and beauty. It is even so with the Old Testament. The New roots itself in it and draws rich nourishment from it. There are two hundred and seventy-five quotations from the Old Testament in the New, which are so many visible threads directly binding the two books together, or roots running out of the one into the other, besides innumerable filaments that interlace them. Jesus was brought up on the Old Testament in his village home and school and had it constantly at his fingers' ends or on the tip of his tongue for ready and apt use. The Old Testament is the foundation and groundwork of the New, and the New could not be understood apart from the Old. No science scraps its early history and despises its crude beginnings, but studies and cherishes them. Every science pays the greatest respect to its early steps and knows that they opened the path and built the road out of the wilderness of ignorance and superstition into its present attainments. We could not cut the Old Testament out of our Bible and cast it aside without irreparable loss: it would be like cutting the root when the tree would die. We must learn to be discriminating in our use of it and especially to see what was germinal or temporary and what had in it the promise of the future. It contains many an old custom or sanctioned institution or practice that the New not only left behind but condemns, and yet the New honors and with discrimination uses it, and we must follow the same principle of interpretation and application.

INFLUENCE OF IT

The influence of the Old Testament has entered more deeply and widely into the laws and life and literature of the world than is commonly thought even by believers in it. It lays down the foundations of our modern civilization and could we remove it the whole structure would be weakened to the point of crumbling. The most eminent jurists have recognized this fact. Chief Justice Taft has said, "The classic English of the Bible has given shape to American literature. Its spirit has influenced American ideals in life and laws and government." The noted jurist, E. C. Wines, in his *Laws of the Ancient Hebrews,* says they are the fundamental ideas at the base of the Hebrew state. These ideas have been enumerated as follows: 1. The unity of God. 2. The unity of the state. 3. Civil liberty. 4. Democracy. 5. An elective magistry. 6. The sovereignty of the people. 7. The responsibility of public officers to their constituents. 8. A prompt, cheap and impartial administration of justice. 9. Peace and friendship with other people. 10. Encouragement of agriculture. 11. Universal industry. 12. The inviolability of private property. 13. The sacredness of the family relation. 14. The sanctity of human life. 15. Universal education. 16. A well adjusted balance of power. 17. An enlightened, dignified and conservative public opinion. 18. Religion as the foundation of all law and life. 19. The spirituality of worship. 20. The rule of right over might. This is a notable list and the achievement of these ideas in that small Hebrew world in their early history is without parallel elsewhere in the world. How strikingly modern they are! Have they not been diffused through the very atmosphere we breathe so that they have shaped and colored our ideas and institutions and life as our spiritual climate?

AN HONEST BOOK

It is true that the Old Testament in its early pages reflects low ethical ideas and is blotted on many a leaf with the savage deeds of barbarous days or with the wickedness of a corrupt age. But this is because it is an honest book and records and starts with the rude civilization of primitive times and advances through progressive revelation and purer ethical ideals to higher levels of doctrine and life; and in the New Testament these lower levels are outgrown and left behind. But taken as a whole the Old Testament is a mass of national literature that ranks as one of the richest literary and spiritual treasures of the world. Its loss would leave a large and irreparable gap in the library of the world's great books, and its spiritual contents and its ministry of preparation for the birth of its more richly endowed child, the New Testament, make it one of our most useful and precious deposits of religious experience.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. In what respects is the Old Testament old?
2. Do science and art value old things?
3. Are some of the best things in the world also the oldest?
4. What are some of the fundamental principles contained in the Old Testament?
5. How can we reconcile some of the early teachings of the Old Testament with the teachings of the New Testament?
6. What are some ways in which we are neglecting the proper study and use of the Old Testament?

XXVIII

ARE THE FOUR GOSPELS TRUSTWORTHY?

The Four Gospels, little pamphlets that can be read through at a sitting and that may seem like mere leaves blown out of the first Christian century, are yet the foundation on which rests the historic structure of Christianity. It is therefore of supreme importance that we know whether or not they are historically trustworthy.

Dates of the Gospels

The first question in this connection is the date of these little books. If they originated one or two hundred years after the events they relate, their value would be impaired. The Fourth Gospel is admittedly later than the first three, or the Synoptics as they are called, because they give a synopsis or outline of the life of Jesus; and is dated by scholars near the end of the first century. It is also attributed by many scholars to John the disciple or to a disciple of John and all acknowledge its historical value.

A base line for determining the dates of the Synoptics is the date of the Acts of the Apostles. This book is practically the biography and letters of Paul, and Luke, its evident author, closes it with Paul in prison waiting for his trial, obviously closing the narrative at this point because there was nothing more about Paul to tell at that time. Paul perished under Nero and probably in the Neronian persecution of 64 A.D., and as Luke wrote the Acts before Paul's death we may date this book at about 62 A.D. But Luke wrote the Acts, as its preface shows, after he wrote his Gospel, and we may therefore date the Gospel of Luke at about 60 A.D. Comparison of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke with Mark shows that Matthew and Luke used Mark's Gospel, following his order of events and incorporating nearly all of his material in their narratives, and therefore Mark falls between 55 and 60 A.D. This line of reasoning and these dates are supported by the weighty authority of Harnack and other scholars. We are now back within twenty-five or thirty years of the death of Jesus, and this excludes legend and myth and gives us good historical ground.

Luke's Preface

Luke in his preface to his Gospel tells us that he had in hand many narratives of the life of Jesus written by those who had received their knowledge from those "who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word," and that he himself had traced the history accurately from the first in order that he might give a systematic account of it to confirm the faith of his friend Theophilus. This is an exceedingly valuable part of Luke's Gospel and assures us, not only that he was not simply depending upon and repeating secondhand sources and traditions, but that he had investigated the subject with the thoroughness of a scholarly historian and that he had as the basis of his narrative many sketches or outlines of the life of Jesus written by those who were themselves eyewitnesses or were in touch with them. He thus based his history on contemporary witnesses and documents after the approved method of the modern scientific historian. This preface of Luke is of inestimable value as an historical authority. Even though all the Synoptics were dated considerably later, yet would this little preface of Luke to the Third Gospel assure us that its author had trustworthy sources in his hand as the basis of his narrative.

Features of the Gospel Narratives

An outstanding feature of the Gospel narratives is that they have none of the marks of imagination and myth, invention and legend, vision and ecstasy, which are careless of order and system, causes and consequences, and unmindful and unconscious of contradictions and impossibilities as they weave all sorts of incongruities and absurdities in the subjective fabric of preconceived wished-for beliefs and desires. These writers and witnesses do not lose touch with the earth and take to the wings of fancy; on the contrary, due allowance being made for the supernatural events they are relating, they keep down on the ground of sober reality and concrete details and observe the order and unity and harmony of normal human experience and historic fact. Facts are freely and frankly recorded that would have been carefully glossed over or suppressed in a partisan account or fictitious story. They tell us things adverse to themselves and to their Master because they were telling the simple truth. In a word, these narratives have the simplicity and artlessness of truth, and these inimitable watermarks of historicity are so many seals authenticating the testimony of these witnesses and writers.

Discrepancies

It is true that there are differences and discrepancies in these narratives, but these variations, though they may be overstrained and magnified into seemingly fatal contradictions, when properly considered are not serious disharmonies and are far removed from fraud or deception, but are what might have been expected and admit of explanation. These writers were not composing a systematic and comprehensive history of the life of Jesus and are not even trying to set forth facts to prove their beliefs, but are only giving personal experiences and impressions from their different points of view. And hence we have only disconnected incidents and fragments of the entire story, and it is not surprising that we cannot put these together so as to make them match all around their ragged edges when other parts are missing that might complete the harmonious whole.

These differences also in general are such as ought to be found in independent accounts. If the writers had all related the same story in exactly the same way, this would throw suspicion on them all as having been in collusion. These individualistic variations in the form of the testimony are strong indications of truthfulness. It may be said of the writers of the Bible as a whole that they were competent men with opportunities of knowing what they related and with honest intentions to tell us what they knew or believed to be true. That they were impostors or mere credulous and deceived story-tellers is not to be believed and is not borne out by their books that have long won and maintained a supreme place among scholars and in the religious world.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why are there four Gospels?
2. How do we know that Luke wrote the Acts?
3. How can we determine the date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels?
4. What is the value of Luke's preface to his Gospel?
5. What are some characteristics of the Gospels?
6. What are instances of discrepancies in the Four Gospels and what is their significance?

XXIX

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE LETTERS OF PAUL?

LETTERS are of especial value to the historian as they are usually written without the conscious purpose of proving anything and are the unpremeditated and spontaneous expression of the author's knowledge and mind. We have thirteen letters ascribed to Paul, and they are from his hand by clear internal and external evidence and by the general agreement of scholars. They fit into their proper places in Luke's narrative in the Acts, and we are as reasonably sure of Paul's authorship of these letters as we are that Cicero wrote those that bear his name.

How Did Paul Know?

An important question in this connection is, How did Paul know the facts as to the life and resurrection of Jesus? He does not leave us in doubt on this point. At first he was a powerful opponent of Jesus and his followers, but on the way to Damascus experienced the epochal conversion that revolutionized his life and had such far-reaching effect upon the history of Christianity. In the first chapter of Galatians he tells us that three years after his conversion, time spent in retirement and meditation, he went up to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and James the Lord's brother. What did Paul and this disciple and brother of Jesus talk about during those eventful days? About the ministry and work of Christ, but especially about his resurrection. In fact, we may say that Paul, a trained lawyer, spent these two weeks investigating this case on the ground where it happened, examining the eyewitnesses and getting first hand knowledge of it. He says that he went up "to visit Cephas" (Gal. 1:18), a word which means "to know by inquiry and personal examination" and "implies a careful and searching inquiry." In I Cor. 15:5-7 Paul tells us that the risen Christ was seen by Peter and James. He must have gotten this information from these men themselves during this memorable visit with them. We are thus brought into contact with these two important witnesses through Paul, and we also know on what solid ground Paul's own knowledge was based.

How Paul Wrote His Letters

We are not to suppose that these thirteen Epistles are all the letters Paul wrote, and in fact we know they are not. They are only selections from his larger correspondence which have been preserved and incorporated in the New Testament. Neither are we to suppose that Paul wrote these letters with any knowledge or thought that he was composing divinely inspired letters that would be preserved and read and studied through the ages as Holy Scriptures.

He wrote them as anyone writes letters in his correspondence with friends, all unconsciously of the divine providence that was guiding him and caring for these letters for our instruction and edification. They are all addressed to churches and individuals for practical purposes. Every one of them was occasioned by some special cause or condition that called for instruction and correction or advice from Paul. Their contents were thus adapted and addressed to local conditions and personal needs and are written in the free and direct and incidental method and style of personal correspondence. They almost wholly lack the structure and style of a systematic treatise or formal history, or of writings intended for general publication.

Yet All the More Valuable

Yet they are none the less but rather all the more valuable on this account. They illustrate abstract principles in their concrete application, and this is one of the best ways of imparting such truth. They touch a large range and variety of topics both doctrinal and practical as they deal with the peculiar conditions of these first Christian churches while they were yet plastic and involved in all the difficulties and dangers, factions and corruptions of their day, when Christianity was new and had not yet developed forms and creeds and was especially subject to the environment of heathen customs and morals, temptations and persecutions. And all the way through Paul is the uncompromising defender and bold champion of the liberty of the gospel and the universality of the Christian faith against the claims and struggles of Judaism to constrict Christianity with its bondage and doom it as a Jewish sect.

Paul was a born thinker and theologian and while dealing with these local and temporary conditions was all unconsciously forging his own Christian ideas and experience into shape and use and working out the fundamental principles and doctrines of the new faith and thus laying the foundations of our Christian creeds and polities. Without imposing on us the fixed and final forms he yet furnished us with the materials that are the substance of our formal faith to-day.

Characteristics of the Letters

These letters are characterized by Paul's intellectual and emotional temper and spirit of independent thought and bold solution of problems and brave action. His pages are often so charged with thought and feeling that the words come tumbling from his pen in a tumultuous torrent, sometimes as broken and chaotic sentences that defy the rules of logic and grammar and give infinite trouble to the commentators. Yet Paul the philosopher and theologian was also Paul the poet and mystic and his imagination could utter winged words and soar into rhythmic melody and beauty that are the praise and charm of the ages, such as the immortal prose poem in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Paul was the first and greatest theologian of the Christian church. He forged the simple gospel into a logical system that roots it in the brain as well as in the heart; he put bones on its flesh and rocks under its flowers and fruits. Such work was necessary to give system and stability to the gospel, without which "the sweet Galilean vision" might have evaporated into myth and mist and long since have faded away. Such is the value of the letters of this great Apostle. Hebrew university graduate, Greek scholar and Roman citizen, he was one of the great men of his age and of all ages and has helped to shape all the Christian centuries. His letters are links of logic that bind Christianity into an historical and theological system that stands as a bulwark of Christian faith to-day.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Name some other famous collections of letters?
2. How do we know that Paul wrote other letters than those in the New Testament?
3. What was Paul's competence as a letter writer?

4. What was Paul's first letter?
5. What are some of his principal letters?
6. What is the value of Paul's letters?

XXX

IN WHAT SENSE IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

INSPIRATION is not a doctrine to bring to the Bible as a principle of its interpretation, but a fact to be deduced from the Bible as the result of the study of the book. This study must consider the whole process by which the Bible was produced and gather its own teaching as based upon and illustrated by all its facts and processes. Inspiration cannot be used to test the Bible, but the Bible must be used to test it.

No Conscious Unity

We so constantly speak of the Bible as though it were one book with a conscious unity and purpose running through it that it may surprise us to face the facts on this point. Of course the Old Testament writers knew nothing of the New Testament, and these writers did not usually know one another's books. The books of the Old Testament were not assembled into one volume until late in Hebrew history; in fact, the canon of the Old Testament was not finally fixed until well on in the second century, A.D. The same general fact holds for the New Testament. Not one of its books was in existence on the day of Pentecost and when the apostles went out into the Gentile world. Probably the first of its books to be written was Paul's letter to the Galatians, and others of them followed down to the end of the first century. It is thus evident that no verse or statement anywhere in the Bible refers to this book as a whole. The authors of its various books at the time of their writing were more or less independent of and unknown to each other, the chief exception to this fact being the writers of the New Testament in their references to the Old.

We then have no single teaching in the Bible with reference to the inspiration of the book as a whole and we must examine its books and teachings with reference to this subject piecemeal, and only after we have gone through the whole book and examined every statement in it can we deduce and construct a doctrine of inspiration. In short, there is very little self-consciousness or care in the Bible on this subject. For the most part we find its authors writing books in accordance with the ordinary means and methods of writing books. The subject of the method and degree of the divine element and guidance in Scripture that we hold of supreme importance and that has been the occasion of so much controversy and fierce strife was little thought of by the Scripture writers themselves and did not trouble them at all.

A Look into Their Literary Workshop

In the preface to Luke's Gospel we are given a look into his literary workshop and can see him and inspiration in the very act and process of making Scripture. He tells us that many had written narratives of the life of Jesus, even eyewitnesses of its events, and that he had subjected these gospels to systematic investigation, and had then composed his Gospel to confirm the faith of his friend Theophilus. Here we see Luke gathering materials, especially original documents, and comparing and testing them and then composing his systematic narrative. He betrays no consciousness of any divine guidance in his work and carried it on as do careful scholars and as even modern scientific historians write their books to-day. The same process applies to all the books of the New Testament. Paul wrote his first letter, the Epistle to the Galatians, with the practical purpose of warning the Galatian churches which he had founded against the destructive error of the Judaizers, and it did not occur to him that he was doing anything more than using his own knowledge and experience in writing it. The same is true of all his letters. Every one of them was written for a practical purpose just as we write letters to-day. When he wrote his little letter to his friend Philemon in behalf of the runaway slave Onesimus, he no more thought he was doing a supernatural thing than do we in writing a letter to a friend. The same process of production runs all through the Bible. We see the authors gathering their materials and using documents and composing their books as authors do to-day.

A Divine Element and Guidance

But is this the whole story? No, at times the writers do affirm they are guided by the Spirit of God. The Old Testament prophets frequently declare, "Thus saith the Lord," and speak in his name and by his authority. Jesus stands apart by himself as being under the immediate guidance and declaring the words and will of his Father. Paul himself at times is conscious that he "received of the Lord" "that which he delivered" to his readers (I Cor. 11:23). These instances are occasional and exceptional. However, any doctrine of inspiration that has much significance must extend to the whole Bible, and inspiration that comes down only at points and in spots would not have much value. Where can we find this continual presence and guidance of the Spirit of God in the Bible? In its general substance and spirit there runs through it a tone and teaching, a light that never was on sea or land, that sets it apart above all other human books and sacred writings. It conveys the good news of God and the gospel of Christ and this evaluates the book and stamps it with divine worth. Its authority and evidence of its divine inbreathing is the supreme spiritual truth and grace it contains. It speaks for itself in all its teachings that it is a revelation come from God.

The Specialized Providence of God

Inspiration is the general providence of God specialized in the production of the Bible. It is inspired as no other book is inspired in that it contains and conveys to us knowledge of the truth and means and supremely of the Person that are sufficient and efficient for our redemption. In a word, the Bible is the book that God made for our salvation. This guards and guarantees the divine result, but leaves the human means and processes open for our study and discovery and verification. This practical purpose and power of the Bible is its own teaching (I Tim. 3:16) and is the ground on which Jesus himself appealed to the Scriptures, "These are they which testify of me."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What does the word inspiration mean?
2. In what sense is the Bible a unity?
3. What do we see in Luke's literary workshop?
4. Is all the Bible inspired in the same sense?
5. Does inspiration guarantee the inerrancy of the Bible?

XXXI

WHAT NEED IS THERE OF THE INCARNATION?

We have so far been proceeding on the basis of belief in God as the general ground of religion, and the question now arises, Is not this enough? Is not a purely theistic faith sufficient for salvation and worship?

The Answer of History

The answer to this question written broadly across all history is in the negative. The pagan religions, whether in their lowest degraded forms or in the purer forms of Greece and Rome or in pantheistic forms, failed to cleanse the world and ended in degradation deeper still. Mohammedanism is a pure and lofty monotheism that has accomplished much and appeals to our respect, but it is a relentless cold faith, having closer kinship with a despot's sword than with a Father's sympathy. Judaism shows us what monotheism can do at its best, and it did serve a temporary purpose as a husk until its corn was ripened. And the experiment of monotheism has repeatedly been tried within Christianity itself. Unitarianism has risen time and again and attempted to gain a foothold as a form of Christian faith, yet it has never attained any considerable degree of acceptance. The Christian Church in all its forms has ever repudiated it as denying the essential fact and faith of Christianity. Long ages of human experience prove that theism is not religion enough for the needs of the human heart and a sinful world.

Theism Logically Leads to Christianity

But theism itself contains the seeds and roots of Christianity. Christianity is not a foreign importation into the world of theistic faith and hope, but a further evolution of it. One truth always leads to another, and thus all truths are linked together. When once we get hold of a true logical thread and pull it long enough, it will unravel the whole web of the world. Franklin put his kite up into a storm-cloud and drew down a spark and this thread that held that kite unraveled into all the modern wonders of electricity. Theism is a germinal truth and contains within itself all possible truth, power and progress. Follow it out to its logical consequences and it will lead straight to Christ and Christianity. This was the argument of Christ himself. "Ye believe in God," he said to his doubting disciples; "believe also in me." As much as to say: "Of course ye believe in God; then believe also in me. If you do believe in God, then you should also logically believe in me." Christ is the logical completion of God. Follow God and we shall come to Christ. God is root and Christ is fruit.

What Kind of God Must We Believe in?

For what kind of God must we believe in? Only in a righteous and good God, a Father. Never will our faith in God reach a worthy and satisfying form until we know him as Father. All the instincts, yearnings and practical demands of our hearts and lives reach up after and find a Father and in his bosom only will we rest. Now what will a true Father do for his lost children in this world? Will he not come to them? We cannot believe that the Father will leave his children as infants crying in the night and with no answer to their cry. All earth's sin and sorrow will come up to his heart and pull upon his mercy and love until he hears and hastens to the scene. All this is expressing the matter in human terms, but these terms spring out of our hearts and our hearts come from God and reflect his Heart. That God should come down into our human kind is the great need of the world. It is this nature of God and need of our world that have issued in the Incarnation of God in his Son. He threw off the veil that obscured his face from men and appeared in the flesh so that they could behold his glory, full of grace and truth. So Christ is in the world as the express image and brightness of God to show us his face and let us feel the warmth of his heart and the touch of his hand. The distance and coldness of a purely monotheistic God are thus removed and he is brought near and made a warm and loving person and presence.

What Will the Father in the Son Do?

And what will the Father in the person of his Son do when he is in the world? He will not be here as a mere spectator of its sin and misery, but will lay hold of the world with all the power of his heart and hand to roll it out of the ditch of sin into the light and love and fellowship of God. He will come as a Teacher who will kindle a great spiritual light so that men can clearly see the way of life.

He will himself be the perfect Pattern of what men should be, sinless in his soul and clothed in all goodness and beauty, and he will himself take every step and go before us in the path of duty and service that he would have us take. And he will go much deeper than this in his work: he will gain the sympathy of men so as to lead them into faith in and fellowship with himself, bring them to a sense of their sin and show them the mercy of the Father. Deeper still he will bear their sin as the great Sacrifice that will atone for their guilt, laying down his life for the life of the world. The processes of salvation, which are illustrated in some degree in every case in which one soul saves or helps to save another, will come to their supreme expression and power in the Son of God, and his own blood will be the cost of the world's redemption.

The Incarnation a Logical Fulfillment

The incarnation of God in Christ is thus seen to be, not an arbitrary and improbable doctrine, difficult to prove and hard to believe, but a natural and logical consequence of theism. It is in line with the whole evolution of the world by which God has increasingly manifested or incarnated himself from its lowest atoms and germs up to man and it completes and crowns this ascent by bringing into the process Christ as the highest manifestation of God and Lord of all. We are not introducing any new principle or taking any illogical leap in passing from God to Christ, but we are just following the same way that God has followed in his whole manifestation of himself. This is the tremendous background of Christianity. If we believe in God, then we need take only one short logical step and we shall also believe in Christ.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is meant by incarnation?
2. Do pagan religions have incarnations?

3. What does the incarnation add to theism?
4. Does the character of God as incarnated in Christ help us to believe in him?
5. How does theism logically lead to the incarnation?

XXXII

WHY WAS THE INCARNATION SO LONG DELAYED?

This question may seem to have only an academic or theological interest, and yet it enters practically into the whole nature and program of Christianity.

The Scheme of Redemption

The scheme of world redemption running through the Bible and adopted by Christianity is that while God has been and is present in enlightening and saving grace throughout all ages and all the world, yet he specially intervened at a particular time and place in the coming of the Messiah or the incarnation of his Son. The stage was set in Palestine for this dramatic entrance of God into the world and there the several scenes were enacted, culminating in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. The promise of this coming was the great expectation during Old Testament times, growing into a passionate longing and urge as the time seemed protracted beyond all early hopes and as the days grew darker and faith was more severely taxed and skepticism grew more outspoken and defiant. No doubt before his advent as after his ascension "mockers" came "with mockery, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming, for all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:3-4).

A Longer Time Scale

The case is much worse than we formerly supposed or than these Hebrew prophets knew. It was formerly thought that about 4,000 years had elapsed from the creation to the birth of Jesus and the perplexing question was, "Why did God wait during this long stretch of time before he came in a special revelation and means of redemption to his lost world?" But we now know that history stretches far back of these 4,000 years and is lost in a mist of immeasurable time. Anthropologists have collected evidence in widely different parts of the world of the existence of man on the planet for at least 50,000 years and most of them say for 100,000 and some even speak of half a million years. We must at least think in a vastly longer time scale than did these Hebrew people and prophets, and the question why the coming of Christ into the world was so long delayed assumes a more ominous aspect. Why did God let his world full of struggling crying sinful children wander so long through the shadows of superstition and cruelty before he came in a visible incarnation to lead them into the light? The question is trying enough to our reason and faith even yet.

Some Suggested Reasons

In answering this question let us not forget that God during this time did not leave his world without his presence, for it is the express teaching of Scripture that he was ever and everywhere in his world with his children leading them into light and salvation. This fact is frequently asserted or implied in the Scriptures and is expressly argued by Paul in Romans 1:20-21. However, the fact remains that these long ages passed before God "sent forth his Son" and we still inquire, Why did he not send him ages earlier and thereby shorten the days of dim relevation and hasten the ushering in of the Light of the world? The general and sufficient answer is that things must get ripe and ready for any event, the mold must be shaped before the molten metal can be cast in it, the age must be ready for the man before the man can meet and minister to the age. There is no use casting seed on the frozen earth in winter or planting a rose bush on ice: we must wait until the breath of spring prepares a genial soil in which the seed can sprout and the bush can bloom. There would equally have been no use in bringing Sir Isaac Newton into the world in the seventeenth century, B.C.; he must wait until the seventeenth century, A.D., before he could be understood or could develop himself so as to serve the world. Einstein, it is said, can be understood by only about a dozen mathematicians, so long was his coming delayed and so little is the world prepared to receive him now that he has come. Every man, especially every great man, must wait for his time, or God brings him on the stage when the stage is ready for him.

This Principle Applied to Christ

This general principle applies to Christ and is expressly applied to him by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." All preceding revelation, whether in the general spiritual presence and providence of God in the world, or in his specially enlightened prophets, was preparatory to the coming of Christ who came when all things were ready for him. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." We can trace this readiness widely in the world in the general preparation of the nations. They had struggled vainly to find God and were composed into such world peace that they could hear the gospel. The Hebrews had been trained in the great ideas of righteousness and spirituality so that they could serve as a medium of introducing the fuller revelation to the world. The great hour struck and the Son of God stepped upon the stage. Had he come at any earlier time he could not have done his work so well.

The Same Answer Applies to Us

The same answer applies to the further coming of Christ into the world. Still are we impatient and many are saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" But God has a long calendar and is working on a vaster and slower scale than our little minds and insurgent wills can understand and be patient with. We are still disposed to hurry him and set times and the very day of his coming. But it is still written: "It is not for you to know times and seasons, which the Father hath set in his own authority. But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." This is our program and marching order and we are to be sure that Christ has come to us and proceed to carry out his will in the world.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is meant by a scheme of redemption?
2. Does the history of the world show any marks of a unitary plan?
3. What evidence is there that man has been on the earth for many thousands of years?
4. Does every man necessarily fit into his time?
5. In what ways may we grow impatient with God's world plan and seeming delay?

XXXIII

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH?

We now come to the initial miracle in the gospel story and it sharply challenges our attention.

Special Opposition to the Doctrine

The virgin birth of Jesus has encountered special opposition, not only from those that reject all supernaturalism, but also from those that admit other miracles in the Gospels. The reasons for this are the scanty evidence for it and the fact that Jesus is repeatedly called the son of Joseph in the narratives and also to the apparently tremendous presumption that lies against it. Human generation through two parents is such a universal fact that it seems hard for some minds to believe that this line of descent has ever been interrupted by a virgin birth. All miracles, however, are equally easy to omnipotence, and the virgin birth is no more a unique exception to the general course of physical events and calls for no greater power to produce it than the resurrection. And the fact is not so exceptional and extraordinary as it may seem, for through the lower portion of the scale of life parthenogenesis or virgin birth is common. "As for virgin procreation," said Thomas H. Huxley, the eminent biologist and agnostic, "it is not only clearly conceivable, but modern biology recognizes it as an everyday occurrence." This fact and teaching of modern science should go far toward removing any prejudice against this miracle.

The Scriptural Evidence

The Scriptural evidence for the virgin birth of Jesus is not extensive but it is definite and positive and very weighty. The silence of Mark and John as to this fact is not specially significant as they equally fail to mention the birth of Jesus at all. Matthew and Luke record the virgin birth with important differences. Matthew evidently tells the story from the point of view of Joseph, relating his sore perplexity on learning the condition of Mary before the formal marriage had taken place and the appearance of the Lord in a dream that relieved his fears. These were facts that could have been known to Joseph alone. It is equally evident that Luke's version tells the story from Mary's point of view, relating the visit of the angel to her with the announcement that the power of the Highest would overshadow her so that she would give birth to the

Son of God and how troubled she was until she was able to exclaim, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Examination of the Narratives

Examination of these narratives disclose strong marks of their credibility. They are integral parts of the Gospels in which they are found and bear no indications of being interpolations. They are remarkable for their simplicity, candor, modesty and evident truthfulness. They are not poetical or mythical in style, but are words of soberness and honest conviction. Their authors were competent and trustworthy men, and the fact that Luke was a physician implies special competency to judge of this fact. The narratives contain facts of such a personal and private nature that they must have come from the inner circle of the holy family. These were people of primitive faith and piety, belonging to that group of humble and devout Jews who were "looking for the consolation of Israel," and these portions of the Gospels bear the impress of this class in their simple and archaic style. They did not tell these stories as wonders of which they were proud, but as mysterious realities which had happened in their experience. We cannot tear these narratives out of the Gospels without mutilating and discrediting them. They bear the inimitable marks of honesty and truth.

The Silence of Paul

Much has been made of the fact that no definite references to this fact are made in the New Testament other than the narratives of Matthew and Luke and of the further fact that several times Jesus is called the son of Joseph. This latter fact may be explained by the fact that he was popularly supposed to be the son of Joseph the carpenter and there was no other way of designating him. Whether Paul knew of the virgin birth or not cannot be determined, but his silence with reference to it in case he had knowledge of the fact is easily understood. He makes little reference to the life and even to the teachings of Jesus: the person and cross and resurrection of Christ fill his vision. His silence as to the virgin birth is just what we might expect. This fact in the life of the Lord was not a public event and was not preachable. In its very nature it is a private and sacred fact, not to be proclaimed from the housetops. In this respect it stands at the opposite pole from the resurrection, which was and is a public fact to be blazed abroad among all men. The virgin birth is not a central support of the whole gospel, as the resurrection was and is. And therefore it is not held as being essential to faith in the gospel. In this respect it does not rank with the resurrection which is a vital fact and central column of Christianity.

Significance of Its Presence in the Narrative

It is difficult, if not impossible, to account for its presence in these narratives on any other theory than its historic truth. The Jews had no basis in the Old Testament for expecting such an event and they themselves would never have invented the story as a birth out of wedlock was abhorrent to them. The story could not have gotten into their writings from pagan sources, for such an origin would have been to them doubly abhorrent. It could not grow up as a myth, for there was not time for this. While the virgin birth in a degree supports the divinity of Christ, yet in a larger degree the divinity of Christ supports the virgin birth. If it is not necessary to explain, it is at least congruous with, the sinlessness of Christ, and it matches his whole character. It is fitting that the Son of God should have a unique entrance into as well as a unique exit from the world. The universal church laid hold of this fact in its earliest creed, and all attempts to dislodge it from the faith of Christendom have failed. For these reasons we believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why does the virgin birth encounter special opposition?
2. What is the Scriptural evidence for it?
3. How can we account for the fact that Jesus is several times in the Gospels called the son of Joseph?
4. Did Paul know about the virgin birth?
5. Is belief in this doctrine essential to Christian faith?

XXXIV

WHAT WAS THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS?

Two or three descriptive verses and one incident are all we know of the childhood of Jesus. We would like to know more: for we are interested in the childhood of great men. We are curious to see whether the stamp of greatness was on them from the beginning, or whether at first they were undistinguishable from other children. Sometimes genius buds in childhood, as in Mozart and Macaulay, but in other cases it sleeps unsuspected for many years. It lies like an explosive in the brain until some spark of circumstance touches it off, or like a seed which must wait for its coming summer.

We wonder what may have been the childhood of Jesus and long for a peep behind the veil. As usual the apocryphal Gospels are most voluble where the inspired Gospels are most reticent. They fill the childhood of Jesus with marvels and miracles that are irrational and absurd. The broad difference between the books that were put in and the books that were kept out of the Bible is one of the wonders and proofs of inspiration. The Gospels largely hide the childhood of Jesus from our view, giving us only a few hints as to what lies behind the scene.

A TRUE HUMAN CHILD

While the Gospels maintain an impressive silence, yet we know more than they tell us and have considerable general knowledge of the childhood of Jesus. We know that he was a true human child and grew up through the natural stages and experiences of human life. He nestled and cooed and smiled in his mother's arms. His "baby hand was pressed against the circle of the breast." His eyes kindled with the light of his mother's eyes and from her lips he caught his first smile. He was lulled to sleep with a cradle song. He took his first tottering steps and invented his first childish words. He played in his father's carpenter shop and went to the village school. We know the textbooks he studied and our children study the same books still in the Old Testament. There were brothers in the home, and he grew up with them. He associated with the boys of Nazareth and was full of play. He wandered in the fields and climbed the hills and early grew familiar with nature in field and forest, flower and bird song. From a nearby hilltop he would catch a glimpse of blue Galilee. We draw the line at any wrong thought or act. He was human, yet he was sinless. But he was not a grown-up boy, such as we used to find in the Sunday school books, old beyond his years, morbidly self-conscious and pious; but a genuine boy, artless, inquiring, spirited, with his whole nature in free and healthy play. The whole charm of his childhood lay in the fact that he was a child and not something else.

The Child Grew

In nothing is the humanness of this child shown more clearly than in the statement that "the child grew." Human life begins in unconscious infancy and must slowly increase in body and mind up to manhood. Jesus, in common with his human kind, came as an unconscious babe, and then he grew. He was subject to all the laws of physical and mental growth. In the home and carpenter shop, in the school and synagogue, he grew day by day, lesson by lesson, and increased in stature and wisdom. He took things as they came in their due order and was not in a hurry. Thirty years he grew in seclusion before he came forth strong to do his work. He got ready before he began. Children are often hurried forward too fast and pushed into publicity too soon. It is pitiful to see children, through hothouse education, or through dress and fashion, despoiled of their youth and made old beyond their years. They should not be thrust into the glare of the world, but kept in seclusion that they may quietly increase in stature and wax strong in spirit, as Jesus did.

A Solitary Floweret

The single incident in the boyhood of Jesus recorded in the Gospel is "a solitary floweret out of the wonderful inclosed garden of thirty years." It occurred when he was twelve years of age and went up with his parents to Jerusalem and was found in the temple in the midst of the rabbis, "both hearing them and asking them questions." This scene in the boyhood of Jesus has been despoiled of its truth and charm by making it out that he was instructing these rabbis and showing off his superior wisdom. On the contrary he was hearing them and asking them questions; he was not teacher but scholar. Jesus never played the part of a smart boy, but was modest and teachable and kept his place in the presence of superiors; and it was his rare spirit of wisdom and candor that excited the admiration of those that heard him. In answer to the anxious question of his mother as to his delay, he replied, "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" This reply is the kernel of this anecdote, the vital germ that kept it alive and caused it to blossom out in the Gospel. Already his life was set to the music of the Father's will. His parents "understood not the saying," a mournful prophecy of the misunderstanding that has attended his teaching to this day.

A Wonderful Record

"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth;

and he was subject unto them." A wonderful record is this of the Son of God. Subject unto them; received instruction and guidance from them and yielded obedience to them. Obedience was the disposition and habit and joy of Jesus. He kept the commandments and increased in favor with God and men. This was the beginning of that obedience that led him all the way through the temptation past the cross up to the throne. Had he begun by disobeying his earthly father he would have ended by disobeying his heavenly Father. Obedience is the foundation stone on which all life is built, and it is laid in the home. True obedience is not bondage but liberty. The steel track does not infringe upon the liberty of the locomotive but gives it all the liberty it has. Obedience to the Lord is the law of life that will give us our fullest life and liberty and joy. Jesus went before us in his childhood and set a perfect pattern for our children and for us all. His very infancy was an element in his ministry by which he is saving the world.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why are children so interesting?
2. Is the child "the father of the man"?
3. What are some of the special dangers of childhood in our day?
4. Why and how should we build our whole civilization around the child?
5. What part did the childhood of Jesus play in his mission and ministry?

XXXV

WHY WAS JESUS A CARPENTER?

"Is not this the carpenter?" was a question concerning Jesus asked by his townsmen in derision and scorn as though it would place a stigma upon him that would forever discredit him as a prophet, but the designation has ever since been worn by him as a mark of honor. Unconsciously they placed on his brow one of his brightest crowns.

A STARTLING FACT

It is still a startling fact, which after nineteen hundred years has not lost its wonder, that the Savior of the world was a carpenter. This is not what the Jews expected and it is not what we would expect. They looked and longed for a messiah who would come as a royal conqueror, and we would look for a great scholar or statesman with wisdom and eloquence to move the world. But God's ways are not as our ways, and his Son came neither as the one nor as the other, but as a carpenter. This question is the only gleam of light we have from the life of Jesus from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of his age. Of this long period comprising more than half his life and six times longer than his public ministry not a word is recorded to tell us what he was doing except this word carpenter. But as an artist with a single sweep of his pencil or brush may draw the outline of his picture, so this word paints in outline the life of Jesus during this period. It sketches the life of one who did not separate himself from his fellow men, but knit himself into the humblest human relations. It shows us a common toiler working at a humble trade and living in honest poverty. There is color enough in this word to paint a complete picture of the outer life and preparatory years of Jesus. It is worth more than all the apocryphal Gospels with all their fancies and absurdities and it is a word that has exercised a noble and blessed influence over the fortunes of mankind.

A PRODUCER

Jesus engaged in useful work. He was a producer, as the word translated carpenter literally means. There were more and better houses in Nazareth or more ploughs and ox yokes on the surrounding farms because he lived than there otherwise would have been. We are sure that his trade was well learned and that everything that left his shop displayed the most thorough and finished workmanship. He knew how to lay off his angles and strike his circles true, and he would mortise his timbers or shape ox yokes so that they would render the best service and would last. Every one knew that he could be trusted and his work bore an unsurpassed reputation and commanded the highest prices. All this was a true part of his ministry by which he helped to save the world from heat and cold and hunger; and it was a fitting preparation for that spiritual carpentry by which he was to join humanity together and build a kingdom that would last forever. We need more of this spirit of faithful service in useful lines in these days when there is so much slovenly work done in every trade and profession, and so many are contributing nothing to the wealth and welfare of the world, but are living in idleness and pleasure as parasites on wealth inherited from others or are robbing others and contributing to the waste and wickedness and ruin of the world.

Content to Stay in Common Ranks

Jesus was content to stay in the ranks of common toilers. His reputed father was a carpenter and he continued in the same trade. He did not hunt around for some more rapid way of making money or seek to rise on steps that led up to office and distinction. There is much said in these days about "getting on in the world," by which it is meant that young men should get off the farms and out of the trades into the professions and offices and that everybody should get rich. Success is an emphatic word in our vocabulary. Now it is true enough that every one should endeavor to develop his powers and make use of his opportunities, but this cry of getting on in the world generally sets up false ideals and works great harm. The truth is that men in getting up in this sense often go down. The true standard of manhood is something immeasurably better than wealth and something that every one can attain. "I believe," said Charles Kingsley, "that a man might be, as a tailor or as a carpenter, every inch of him a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman." A saint, a scholar, and a gentleman: these are the qualities and attainments that constitute a true man, and every one, whatever his station in life, can have them. Jesus was as truly a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman while making ploughs and ox yokes as when preaching the Sermon on the Mount. Instead of keeping up this everlasting cry of getting on in the world, let us know that most of us must stay where we are, and in the humblest station we can develop the highest manhood and may every one of us be a saint, a scholar and a gentleman.

The Carpenter and the Church

How stands the relations to-day between this carpenter and the church called by his name? The painful fact must be admitted that there is a chasm between them which appears to be widening, especially between the laboring classes and the church. The causes for this separation are complex and lie partly on both sides, but the main cause on the side of the church is its caste spirit. Workingmen are instinctively feeling this and are publicly saying it. It is probably a literal and would be a ludicrous, were it not such a shocking, fact that if Jesus were to appear unknown in his carpenter's clothes in some churches in which he is ostensibly and ostentatiously worshiped to-day, he would be given the cold shoulder and might be unceremoniously thrust out. The church that was founded by a carpenter whom the common people heard gladly and whose gospel was first preached by fishermen, that began by leveling all social distinctions and gathering in the poor, has begun the process of sifting out the better classes and is in danger of becoming the possession and privilege of the rich. This tendency must be corrected and Jesus the Carpenter must be as welcome in his church as Jesus the Son of God, or it will wither and pass away.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why does it startle us that Jesus was a carpenter?
2. What part did this fact play in his ministry?
3. In what sense should we all be producers?
4. Are professional people producers?
5. Are the laboring classes withdrawing from the church, and, if so, why?

XXXVI

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?

After thirty years of seclusion Jesus stepped forth into publicity down in the Jordan valley where John was administering the baptism of repentance, and he offered himself for this rite. John hesitated, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus persisted and John yielded. Why did Jesus receive baptism?

A Real Reason for the Act

There was some real reason for this act. He needed this ordinance and would not have been perfect without it. It was not a fictitious performance done for mere show, but a genuine baptism. There was no acting or display in it, but everything about it was real, just what it purported to be. We must take this view of the whole life of Jesus. His growth in wisdom was a true process of education. His temptation was not a sham battle. When he wept at the grave of Lazarus his tears came from his heart. When he prayed in Gethsemane that the cup of the cross might pass from him, for a moment he meant it. His life was genuine in every act and utterance, and there was not a word in it said for mere effect.

Obedience to an Appointed Ordinance

Jesus received baptism in obedience to an appointed ordinance. "Thus it becometh us," he said, "to fulfill all righteousness." The baptism of John was appointed of God, for John was a prophet. Jesus was made under the law, and therefore under obedience to the ordinances of religion. These ordinances he kept from his circumcision in infancy down to the Passover under the shadow of the cross. He was circumcized, he was baptized, he read the Scriptures, he prayed, he worshiped in the synagogue. He did not maintain that because he was holy he did not need these ordinances, but because he was holy he kept them perfectly.

This example of our Lord shows us the necessity of religious ordinances and the duty of observing them. Objections are made to ordinances as being unnecessary and lifeless forms; the spirit is the life. Undoubtedly the inner spirit is the life of religion, but can we have the inner life as well without the outer form? Can we drink water without using the cup that holds the water? We may have ordinances without religion, but hardly religion without ordinances. Dangerous as are ordinances as constrictions that may strangle the inner spirit of religion, we must have them. Jesus always put vital emphasis on the inner life of religion, but he never did away with ordinances; on the contrary, he obeyed them and enjoined them on us.

The Meaning of the Rite as Applied to Jesus

The exact meaning of baptism in the case of Jesus must be discriminated carefully. The first significance of John's baptism was repentance for and remission of sin, and in this sense Jesus could not have personally received it. Yet while he had no sin of his own, he was so identified with the sinful world as its Savior that he bore its sins representatively, and the washing away of these sins was symbolized in his baptism. John's baptism had a further significance which did personally apply to Jesus. It meant, not only leaving the old life of sin, but also entering the new life of obedience. It was the sign of God's kingdom, a mark of consecration to his service, corresponding in a degree with the flag of our country and the uniform of the soldier. As the founder of the kingdom, it was necessary that he should visibly enter it himself. He did not come to stand outside the door and simply point men in, but to go in himself; not simply to tell men to be holy, but to be holy himself and at every step to lead the way. "He goeth before." He did not ask us to do anything that he did not first do himself. Jesus, then, in being baptized, showed that he was in the kingdom by accepting its appointed sign, by wearing its badge and marching under its flag. Baptism with us is the outer sign of the inner change and state of heart that signifies the kingdom within us. It is not the cause of this change, for forty baptisms could not wash away one sin, but only the sign of this change. By this act we enroll ourselves among the soldiers of Christ and take our place in his ranks under his flag. We give proof that we are willing to do the will of Christ and thus to fulfill all righteousness.

The Heavens Opened

Jesus came up out of that baptismal water a new man into a new world. The heavens opened and the Holy Spirit streamed down upon him with the fullness of God. A voice from heaven acclaimed him God's beloved Son in whom he is well pleased. This probably marked the moment when Jesus became fully aware of his divinity and Messiahship. Into the mystery of this moment we cannot enter. What glad recognition of his Father, what trembling sense of responsibility, what mighty throb of joy he experienced we cannot conceive. But through all his hours of ministry and trial and darkness, he must have been made strong and glad with this assurance.

This great blessing came out of his obedience in receiving baptism. Jesus probably had no expectation of this gift when he offered himself for this ordinance. He was then simply doing his duty in fulfilling all righteousness. But he faithfully obeyed it and, lo, this humble duty blossomed out and bore these wondrous heavenly fruits. Had Jesus never gone down into that baptismal water, he never would have come up under an opened sky with the Holy Spirit streaming upon him, and God never would have pronounced him his Son. We never can tell how near we are to an unexpected blessing when we are about to perform a duty. The humblest act faithfully done may be a doorway into the greatest gift of God. Let us not hesitate at any of God's ordinances or commandments or opportunities but, however unnecessary or humble or hard they may seem, fulfill all righteousness, and then, as we come up from the service we also in some degree shall see heaven opened and the Spirit of God descending upon us and we shall know that we are God's beloved sons in whom he is well pleased.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is a religious ordinance? Do all religions have them?
2. What was the meaning of John's baptism?
3. Why did Jesus hesitate to receive it?
4. In what sense was he baptized?
5. Why should we be baptized?

XXXVII

WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS?

"Then," immediately after his baptism, Jesus was led up into the wilderness to be tempted. Baptism and temptation were crowded close together in his life. Scarcely had the voice from heaven died away when a whisper was heard from hell. Out of the benediction of the Father, Jesus stepped into a desperate struggle with the devil. There are sudden and violent changes of weather in the spiritual world and Jesus passed through them all.

The Meaning of the Conflict

Let us take a general view of the field and consider the meaning of this conflict. What was the situation and state of mind with Jesus at this hour? He had just come up from his baptism which probably marked the moment when he became fully conscious of his supernatural Messiahship and power. Seized and overwhelmed with this mighty consciousness, Jesus went into the wilderness to meditate upon and determine how he was to handle this tremendous power. What would be the first, most natural, strongest and most deadly temptation in the possession of his divine endowment? To use it selfishly for personal ends. This is the temptation that always arises in connection with the sudden acquisition of power, as when a man gains great wealth or a high office. Sudden power of any kind puts a strain on character and is a dangerous possession. The great question with Jesus was, How was he to use his divine power? For selfish ends, personal comfort and gratification? or only in the service of God for the salvation of the world? It was a critical moment with him. Were he to use his power one way, he would be lost; if he were to use it the other way, the world would be saved. Satan saw this psychological moment and was there to push Jesus off the precipice of his own selfishness into this pit of destruction. This personal aggrandizement was the poisoned point of each of the three arrows that Satan shot at Christ. This temptation put a tremendous strain on the human nature of Jesus. It was no sham battle but a real and terrible conflict. It was an instance of the temptation and testing that must come upon every finite person and it fell with full force upon the person of our Lord. It was by this necessary testing that he was made perfect and stood victor as the strong Son of God, mighty to save.

THE SUCCESSIVE TEMPTATIONS

"If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." The very tip of this temptation was a doubt. This was the point of the first temptation Satan shot into the world. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" Satan had invented no new weapon in thousands of years. Doubt may be a pioneer of new knowledge, but it may also be the mother of disobedience. Get us to doubt fundamental truth and virtue, and it is a short and easy step into sin. Jesus, having fasted forty days, craved food in every fiber of his body and Satan struck him at his weakest hour and point with the suggestion of fresh fragrant bread. How innocent seemed the proposal to convert stones into bread, how necessary it is to sustain our physical life! But Jesus saw through the proposal as a temptation to use his power for his personal comfort, and if he did this once he would do it again, and in thus saving his life would, through his distrust of God, lose his soul. The plea that we must do anything to make a living is the form in which this temptation meets us, but Jesus met it at the beginning of his ministry and struck through it to its false heart and it lay dead at his feet.

The second temptation approached Jesus at an opposite point. The first suggestion was that he should trust God too little: the second that he should trust him too much by presumptuously casting himself down from the temple in defiance of natural law and tempting God to save him from his folly. It was a proposal to find a short cut to the kingdom by gaining instant popular applause and avoiding the long and painful way of the cross. The third temptation proposed to gain the kingdom in a still more daring way by bowing the knee to Satan and win the world by a word. Perhaps the inner meaning of this proposal was to use worldly means to gain the world. Alexander and Cæsar had cut their way to their kingdom by the sword, and might not Jesus in spirit do the same thing by bowing to the God of this world?

Jesus felt the full force of all these temptations. He gazed upon the splendid picture and fascinating scene of that outspread world. He saw how short was the step that promised the throne. Then turning in resistless might, he tore the mask from his tempter, revealed him in all his hideous nakedness as Satan, bade him from his presence and declared his eternal allegiance to the Lord his God.

The tempter had shot his last arrow and had no other weapon to bring forth. The Son of God was still untouched; not one poisoned point had pierced the white armor of his soul, not one fleck had stained the purity of his heart. And the devil, foiled, defeated and crushed, fled into the infinite darkness whence he came.

The Means of the Victory

Let us mark the means by which this victory was won. "It is written." "It is written." "It is written." The Word of God was the shield by which Jesus thrice met and stopped these arrows so that they fell blunted and broken at his feet. Yet it was not simply by quoting Scripture that he defended himself, for Satan quoted Scripture, too. It was by his grip on the realities back of these words that he conquered. They were simply the outer signs and means of the inner verities in his soul that were his armor and his strength. The sense of God's Fatherhood, trust in him, steady sober obedience to him, unswerving loyalty and love as his Son, were his unfailing support. He conquered by the ordinary means of grace. He was tempted in all points like as we are and he conquered as we may. We need no new weapons to resist our temptations: for still "it is written." The old Bible furnishes shields and swords to match and master all the temptations of our modern world. With these written words transmuted into living realities in our hearts, we can resist the devil and he will flee from us. And when he is gone the angels of God will come.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What sudden changes occur in our religious experiences?
2. Is temptation a necessary possibility in our human world?
3. Why was Jesus tempted?
4. How did he resist temptation?
5. Are we tempted in the same way as Jesus and can we conquer by the same means he used?

XXXVIII

IN WHAT WORLD DID JESUS LIVE?

IN our human world, of course, which remains fundamentally the same through all ages and changing conditions of civilization and country and climate. Yet also it takes on different shapes and colors in its laws and customs with each new age, and the world in which Jesus lived was a fact that entered deeply into his life.

PALESTINE

His own country was Palestine in which he was born and lived his whole life and which was dear to him by all the ties of history and patriotism. It was a small country, almost tiny in its area, no larger than some of our counties, but so Greece was a small country and yet what mighty products of genius grew on the rocky hand that thrust its slender fingers out into the sea. Palestine had been the scene and seat of Hebrew history through its great days, but in the time of Jesus it was a conquered province of Rome and Jesus was a Roman subject. This fact was the most prominent feature of the life of the Jews in the days of Jesus and embittered all their thoughts. They were terribly restless and exasperated under this hated pagan yoke and at times broke out against it in rebellion that was always extinguished in blood. Jesus himself accepted this Roman sovereignty as the existing government and gave it his support, paying its taxes and teaching obedience to its laws. This was a difficult and dangerous point in his relation with his own people and brought him under their suspicion and culminated in charges of treason and led to his death on the cross.

The population of Palestine was mainly Jewish in blood but also mixed with considerable foreign elements. The aristocratic and ruling classes mostly lived in Judea and around Jerusalem, the capital and seat of worship and of education in its two chief schools or colleges. Galilee was a more rural district which contained no large city and was inhabited by farmers and fishermen and was uncultivated in manners. Judea, however, was more conservative and traditional and less open to progressive ideas than was Galilee that lay more directly on the highway between the West and the East and was more exposed to cosmopolitan liberalism. Jesus passed his ministry in both of these sections and was in contact in his life and teaching with both the conservatism of Judea and the progressivism of Galilee.

The Greek World

Palestine lay at the crossroads of the world and was environed on every side, bordering on Egypt on the south, Babylon on the east, Greece on the west, while over all its world Rome flung its mighty shadow. While Palestine was a Roman province, yet it was more deeply infiltrated with Greek ideas and life. Its most pervasive medium and influence was the Greek language which is one of the most expressive and beautiful of human languages and enshrines the most splendid treasures and glories of literature to this day. This language overran the ancient world and was generally used or understood in the cities and towns of Palestine. Jesus no doubt was reared in Aramaic, the vernacular descendant of the ancient Hebrew and commonly spoke it in his life. A few of his Aramaic words are preserved in the Gospels. In his sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane he said, "Abba," Father, which was possibly one of the first words his infant tongue uttered, and in his cry on the cross we hear the very words and sounds of his lips. Yet we may be sure that Jesus knew Greek and could use it on occasion. He must have talked with the Greeks who came to see him (John 12:20) in their own language, and his trial before Pilate probably was conducted in this world language. This fact carries with it the consequence that Jesus, like Paul, must have had some acquaintance with Greek literature and life and we know not with what strange wistfulness he looked out over the Greek world from the hilltops at Nazareth and what deep stirrings moved his heart as he answered the request of the Greeks that sought to see him.

THE ROMAN WORLD

Yet the central city and world wide power of Rome that Cæsar had cut out with his sword and flung around the Mediterranean sea, turning it into a Roman lake, overshadowed and dominated Palestine and laid its hand on every point of Jewish life. Roman proconsuls and other administrators were in all the provinces and principal cities, Roman legions in glittering steel marched along all its roads, and the tax collector was ubiquitous. The most prominent feature of Roman genius was administrative ability. The Roman was strong where the Greek was weak, and weak where the Greek was strong. The Greek had philosophical acumen and artistic sensitivity, but he lacked executive power. He could build a system of metaphysics and mold marble, but he could not build a political fabric larger than a city state because he could not join and weld city states into permanent cohesion and solidarity. Under the mighty wing of Rome the warring world was reduced to peace and began to recover its exhausted energies and to build up its agriculture and industry and to grow in prosperity and wealth. While Greek thought impregnated the atmosphere of that world, yet the mighty hand of Rome molded it into shape and rigidly held it under its control.

The Stage of the World

The world was thus set as a stage for the coming of Christ and the introduction of the gospel. Its clash and clamor had been hushed into quiet in which the gospel could be heard, and solid and safe roads ran out in every direction along which it could go. Jesus lived in the midst of this world and his human life was cast in its mold. Its languages and literature, law and government and order, trade and customs, religion and worship, all entered into his education and growth, teaching and ministry. As he was subject to his parents, so also was he subject to pervasive Greek spirit and Roman law. In this sense and degree he was the child of his age, a man of his time. This does not lower his divine nature or remove him from us, but rather brings him nearer to us as he also lived in our human world which is essentially to-day what it was then.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Where was Palestine and how did it get its name?
2. What has ancient Greece contributed to our modern world?
3. What inheritance do we derive from the Roman Empire?
4. Was Jesus a good citizen?
5. What do we owe to our country and government?

XXXIX

TO WHAT CHURCH DID JESUS BELONG?

Jesus was born into a state church as he was born into citizenship in his own country. Judaism was the established church of the Jews and all Jews were by birth members of it.

THE WORSHIP AT JERUSALEM

The religion of the Jews was centered in Jerusalem where sacrificial worship was restricted to the temple. Herod the Great had built this temple, which was an imposing structure with marble walls and flashing gilded roof, a mass of snow and gold. The temple service was held daily and consisted of bloody sacrifices and incense offerings administered by white robed priests and was accompanied by an antiphonal choir composed of singers and players on instruments and with the blowing of silver trumpets, and altogether it was an elaborate and splendid ceremony. The three great annual feasts of the Jews also drew them from all parts of the land to take part in these historic occasions.

The doctrines of Judaism were contained in the Old Testament and founded on the teachings of their great leaders and prophets from Abraham down through Moses and other teachers to their own day, and consisted in the unity and sovereignty and righteousness of God, salvation from sin through sacrifice and faith, and supremely in the hope of the Messiah and of the kingdom of God which he would inaugurate.

THE SYSTEM OF LEGALISM

But the religion of Judaism had developed beyond the system of the Old Testament and had been elaborated and hardened into a system of legalism which had grown up around the law of Moses. This law had been expanded and interpreted by the scribes and Pharisees into a highly complicated set of minute injunctions and prohibitions that were almost impossible of obedience and hampered and burdened life to an incredible degree. Jesus came into frequent and growing collision with this ritualistic and legalistic religion, and it was the chief occasion of his break with the priests and Pharisees and of their hostility to him that culminated in his death on the cross.

The Synagogue

In addition to the centralized worship at Jerusalem, there was the worship that was everywhere carried on in the synagogue, which corresponded with our local church. The synagogue was found in all the cities and towns and villages of Palestine, as well as wherever Jews had settled in foreign countries. The service consisted in reading selected portions of the Scriptures, chiefly the law and the prophets, together with an exposition of a passage or a sermon and prayer. A collection was taken for the poor. Each synagogue was governed by a board of elders, of whom one presided as "ruler," but there was no minister in our sense of the word and any one might read the Scripture or speak, so that the service was a social one after the manner of our prayer meetings.

The common school was also held in the synagogue, either in the building or in one connected with it, and attendance was compulsory on all Jewish children, beginning at the age of six years. The synagogue was thus the precursor of the common school and even embodied our principle, which we Americans may think we invented, of compulsory attendance.

While Jesus attended the great yearly feasts at Jerusalem, beginning at twelve years of age, yet his home church was the synagogue in Nazareth. Here he went to school and we know the very textbooks he studied, the books of the Old Testament, and here he worshiped through all his childhood and early manhood; and after he began his public ministry he continued to attend the synagogue "as his custom was." It was in a synagogue that he preached his first sermon, and he continued to teach and work miracles of healing in it to the end of his life.

Parties of the Jewish Church

Several parties had grown up in Judaism in the time of Jesus and were prominent in it. While they were in part political yet they were chiefly ecclesiastical and Jesus had much to do with them, or rather they with him. The Sadducees were the high priestly and court party. They were wealthy aristocrats who stood in with the Herodian and then with the Roman government and had political and social prestige; and they usually had the office of high priest and the temple administration was in their hands. As regards doctrines, they held to the Mosaic law as contained in the Old Testament but rejected the traditional additions to it which had grown into such burdensome complexity. They also rejected belief in angels and spirits and the resurrection of the dead and were doubtful about immortality. Altogether they were the extreme liberal party among the Jews, holding to formal religion and occupying ruling positions in the church but lacking in the spirit of piety.

Over against the Sadducees were the Pharisees, who were the party in opposition to the government and were the extreme orthodox party or the fundamentalists of their day. They were the traditionalists, and Jesus with his bold free teaching and spirit quickly came under their suspicion and their bitter and deadly opposition.

JESUS MADE THE BEST OF HIS CHURCH

This was the church in which Jesus had his birthright. It was a church gone to seed in hard orthodoxy and unspiritual ambitions and was an altogether uncongenial and unpromising field in which to sow the gospel and inaugurate the new kingdom of God. But Jesus stayed in it and worked with it as long and as far as he could. He did not plead its worldly atmosphere and uncharitable spirit and the dreary droning of its orthodox preaching as an excuse to withdraw from it, but he used it temporarily as an imperfect means to his broader and infinitely more spiritual purpose of founding the kingdom of God in the world. But it little understood him and turned upon him in fateful fury. It tried to extinguish his teaching and very name in his own blood, and thereby only sowed it the wider over the world. And about the saddest words recorded of Jesus are: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is a state church? Do any countries have such a state to-day?
2. What was the relation of the Hebrew church to the Hebrew state in the Old Testament?
3. How had Judaism in the days of Jesus drifted so far away from the religion of the prophets?
4. What use did Jesus make of the church into which he was born?
5. How far should we conform to our church?

XL

WHAT WAS THE MINISTRY OF JESUS?

A BIRD'S EYE or airplane view of the ministry of Jesus will help us to grasp it in its totality and thereby to relate and understand better its principal events. Jesus was born under Herod the Great, who died in 4 B.C., and as he began to teach at the age of thirty he entered his public ministry in 26 A.D. The duration of his ministry depends on how many Passover feasts he attended, and this depends on whether the unnamed feast in John 5:1 was a Passover. It is generally held that it was a Passover, making four he attended, and this would make his ministry extend to three years and the ascension would fall in the spring of 29 A.D. There are elements of uncertainty in some of these dates, but they may be accepted as approximately correct.

THE FIRST YEAR

The first public appearance of Jesus was down in the Jordan valley at the baptism of John the Baptist, who was drawing crowds to his great revival meeting that was shaking the whole land. Jesus appeared before John and as they were probably cousins they probably knew each other before this event. Jesus requested John to baptize him, and John, at first hesitating, administered to him the ordinance and Jesus came up out of the water with the descent of the Spirit upon him and a mighty consciousness of his divine nature and mission. The temptation in the wilderness immediately followed, and out of this desperate struggle with the devil Jesus came forth triumphant, master of himself and of the world.

He began to gather disciples by private personal interviews and in this way gave a preliminary call to four—James and John, Peter and Andrew. He also at this time held the notable interview with Nicodemus, a distinguished rabbi who came to him by night, and unfolded to him the nature of the new birth and some of the deepest mysteries and most glorious aspects of the kingdom of God. The first cleansing of the temple also occurred in this year and in it he made a visit to Galilee when he attended the wedding at Cana. The records of this year, which was mostly spent in Judea, are scanty. He retired from Judea because of the threatened persecution of Herod, who had imprisoned John the Baptist, and on the way up to Galilee through Samaria he held the notable interview with the woman at the well in which he delivered one of his most splendid discourses to an audience of one.

THE SECOND YEAR

The second year of the ministry of Jesus was spent mostly in Galilee and events in the Gospels begin to thicken up. He opened his Galilean ministry with a sermon in the synagogue in his own village of Nazareth, where he was rejected and driven out of town. He then went down to Capernaum on Lake Galilee where he made his headquarters and from it carried on his itinerant ministry for more than a year. He now formally called his twelve disciples and delivered the Sermon on the Mount as the platform and program of his kingdom. He made missionary tours through Galilee and once went outside of Palestine on a summer vacation for rest into the region of Tyre. He sent his disciples out on such journeys two by two and thus initiated them into the practice of preaching. He wrought many miracles, such as feeding the five thousand, casting out demons, and stilling the storm on Lake Galilee. A committee came to him at this time from John the Baptist inquiring whether he were indeed the Messiah and the way in which Jesus dealt with John's doubt is one of the most splendid things in the New Testament. The Pharisees up in Jerusalem were now growing increasingly suspicious of the teaching of Jesus and sent spies into Galilee to report upon his doings and this was the beginning of the hostility that finally ended in the fury of their hatred and his death on the cross. Near the close of his Galilean ministry Jesus took his disciples up into a quiet region in the north where he made to them the momentous disclosure of the coming crucifixion. He now started down through Galilee on his final journey to Jerusalem, on the way experiencing his transfiguration.

The Third Year

The third year of his ministry Jesus spent in Judea. Across the Jordan in Perea he taught, delivering some of his greatest parables, and on the news of the death of Lazarus went to Bethany, which he made his home during the last days. The final week preceding the crucifixion occupies one-fourth of the four Gospels and one-seventh of the entire New Testament, showing its relative importance. Palm Sunday with its triumphal entry into Jerusalem opened this week. Each morning Jesus would go into the city for teaching and in the evening would return to the Bethany home. He again cleansed the temple and faced the Pharisees and scribes with splendid scorn and audacity. An interesting incident of the week was the desire of "certain Greeks" to see him, which turned the thoughts of Jesus to profound musings. The institution of the Lord's Supper was followed by the visit to the Garden of Sorrow in Gethsemane, and this led on to the trial and the crucifixion. The resurrection with its burst of light from the open and empty grave dispersed the midnight darkness and despair of the disciples and transformed them into men of masterful faith and might. The forty days following culminated in the ascension at which Jesus was caught up out of sight and the story of his earthly mission was closed.

A Short but Wonderful Life

It was a short public life and work of only three years, but it was epochal and of world significance beyond that of any other life that was ever lived. It has given us a new base from which to start and carry on our calendar and the most wonderful piece of news in the daily newspaper are the four figures that give it its date. It has undermined old empires and hoary systems of social injustice and is reshaping the ages and building them on foundations of truth and righteousness and brotherhood. It shows God in action and the best thing we can say of God is that he is the Christlike God. Such is the ministry in a thumb sketch that is breathing its beneficent influence through all our modern civilization and is the only divine hope of the world.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Give the principal events in each of the three years of the ministry of Jesus?
2. Of which year do we have the fullest account in the Gospels?
3. How did Jesus accomplish so much in so brief a time?
4. What cut his ministry short?
5. Would a longer ministry have added to his essential work?

XLI

HOW DID JESUS BEGIN HIS WORK?

From his temptation in the wilderness Jesus came forth strong in spirit, master of himself and of the world, and returned to the Jordan where John was still baptizing. John was now the central figure in all Judea at the zenith of his popularity, and he pointed to Jesus and exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" He was gathering disciples of his own, but he turned them from himself to Jesus, of whom he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." He appreciated the supreme and solitary greatness of Jesus and cast his own crown at his feet.

Call of the First Disciples

Two of his disciples turned from John and followed Jesus, Andrew and John the son of Zebedee. To their inquiry, "Master, where dwellest thou?" Jesus answered, "Come and see." Thus the very first appeal of Jesus to men to become his disciples was not a dogmatic deliverance, but an invitation to exercise their own judgment in visiting him and trying him out. From ten o'clock in the morning until the evening shadows fell, Jesus and these two men engaged in earnest conversation concerning the Messiah and his kingdom; and when they separated Jesus had bound these first disciples to himself with cords of faith and friendship that thereafter never broke. There was no revival meeting or religious excitement in connection with these conversions, but in the privacy and quietness of a personal interview these men gave their hearts to Jesus as the Christ. It is not necessary to engage in public preaching and sway great audiences in order to save men, however important and powerful such means may be; a private word may be equally effective in drawing souls into the kingdom.

Disciples Gain Other Disciples

Jesus gained these two disciples himself, and now they started out to gain others. Andrew found Simon his brother and brought him to Jesus. If John found his brother James at the same time, the number of disciples doubled the first day. Andrew, full of the joy of his own discovery, hastened to his brother with the announcement, "We have found the Messiah!" That was glad news to a Jew, and Andrew could not keep it to himself, but immediately imparted it it to his brother, "and he brought him to Jesus." Jesus found Andrew, Andrew found Simon: this is the way the kingdom started to grow, each converted man finding the next one. Jesus began the process, and his own converts carried it on. Christians are Christ multiplied and continued. Andrew found his brother, and kinship and friendship are natural lines of connection along which the gospel still works. Ties of blood are powerful cords drawing others into the kingdom. Jesus looked upon Simon with searching insight and said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." Peter means rock, and the new name described the new nature he was to receive and develop through his fellowship with Jesus. There are too many Christians of clay: Christ wants Christians of rock.

Andrew remained an obscure disciple, while Peter began to shine with brilliance and became conspicuous and forever famous, the one disciple revolving around the other as a mere satellite and known as "Simon Peter's brother." Yet it was the obscure brother that drew the brilliant one within the attraction of the Light of the world and thus made him luminous. We may not be flaming apostles ourselves, but we may draw to Christ others who will be burning and shining lights.

The Process of Growth Continued

The next day Jesus started for Galilee, and presently fell in with Philip and said unto him, "Follow me." Philip joined the little company of disciples, and thus it grew even as it passed along the public road. Again the process of one disciple finding another began, and "Philip findeth Nathanael, and said unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." This speech shows that Philip was a student of the Scriptures and knew what to look for in the Messiah and that he found these marks fulfilled in Jesus. But this announcement struck a snag in Nathanael's mind, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Nazareth was a rival of Cana, Nathanael's town, and so the gladdest announcement that could come to a Jew met with a rebuff born of a petty local jealousy. Philip did not undertake to argue the point with Nathanael, for rarely does controversy clear up points of prejudice, but his simple answer was, "Come and see." After a brief interview with Jesus, Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel." What no controversy could have done, simple seeing for himself did do. This is Christ's own proposal for the solution of all our doubts and difficulties. Fellowship and obedience are ever the way out of these into clearness and sureness of faith.

How the Kingdom Began to Grow

Thus we see how the kingdom began to grow. It is interesting to study how Jesus started his work. He did not begin and carry on his work, as we would have expected, with a great spectacular program and campaign. He did not go to Jerusalem, the civil and religious metropolis, and there build a huge tabernacle seating five or ten thousand people and preach to packed audiences. On the contrary he went into the obscure parts of the country and engaged in his work quietly and privately, trying to keep down excitement and avoid crowds. It is true that he did at times preach to great audiences, but he preferred to meet people in small groups or as individuals. It seemed that he would rather sit down and talk with one man than preach to five thousand. It is remarkable that no conversion is recorded as having taken place under his public preaching. Jesus picked up his converts through private interviews one at a time. When he preached to a throng he might get nobody, but when he talked with one he was sure of his man. As Christ found Philip and Philip found Nathanael and in time some one found us, so are we to keep adding link to link in the lengthening chain of his kingdom until it binds his first with his final coming.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What advantage has the private religious interview as compared with great revival meetings? Did Jesus use both methods?
2. Is kinship a special means and duty of bringing others to Christ?
3. Is the appeal to personal experience the strongest argument to win Christian converts?
4. What are some points to be observed in endeavoring to win converts?
5. Why have personal appeals to others grown less frequent and urgent among us?

XLII

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH?

IT was night and Jesus was closeted with one man. Two of our Lord's greatest discourses were delivered to single hearers, Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, and with the great Preacher one soul was a great audience. This first recorded private discourse of Jesus is compact with the great doctrines and duties of the kingdom of God, and his theology was complete from the beginning.

NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE JEWS

Nicodemus was a distinguished rabbi and Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin and a man of wealth and high social standing. He came to Jesus by night, which may have been due to timidity or something worse, but of this we cannot be sure. He opened his interview with Jesus by paying him a remarkable compliment. He addressed him as rabbi and declared him to be a teacher come from God.

Perhaps he thought such an introduction of himself to the young Nazarene would win his favor and bring him an offer of a chief place in the new order he was proclaiming. He would have been a splendid convert and powerful accession to the cause of Jesus, but he took no notice of his flattering compliment, paid no deference to his orthodoxy and learning and social standing and made no bid for his support. He no more relaxed the principles of his kingdom for this wealthy and powerful rabbi than he did for illiterate and profane fishermen. On the contrary he met him with a bold and almost brusque demand for a new birth as the necessary condition for entering his kingdom. The splendid audacity of Jesus here flashes out. He was no time-server but set himself against all the currents of his age. This eminent doctor of divinity stood high in the church, he was learned in the Scriptures, no stain was upon his professional robe, but he was not fit for the kingdom of God.

A Puzzled Doctor of Divinity

Nicodemus was puzzled, although he ought not to have been, for his Old Testament tells of a new heart and the rabbis had a saying that a convert is "like a new child newborn." Yet Nicodemus did not know what Jesus was talking about and displayed surprising and lamentable ignorance, and there are still many surprising people in the church. Jesus explained the new birth as one of the spirit and brought it into line with natural law that like must come from like, flesh from flesh, and spirit from spirit. Nicodemus was still perplexed, and Jesus expressed surprise that a master in Israel should not know these things. Jesus proceeded to set forth his authority for his teaching. He was not a mere philosopher or theorist spinning out personal opinions or guesses at truth; neither was he teaching knowledge that he gained secondhand from others; but "we speak," he declared, "that we do know and testify that we have seen." Jesus knew whereof he spoke, not as the result of traditional teaching however ancient and sacred, but out of the living fountain of his heart, a well of water springing up within him and flowing fresh from the heart of God. This originality of Jesus was ever the wonder of the Jews whose theology was crystallized and fossilized tradition, husks out of which the pure grain of the spirit had long since been lost. Jesus Christ knew what he was teaching, for it was his own experience and on the subject of the kingdom of God he is ever the greatest expert and supreme authority. Traditional knowledge has its place in every field, science and art, as truly as in religion, and yet all knowledge enters vitally into our life and character only as it becomes our own experience, so that we can say that we speak that we do know and testify that we have seen. Jesus in his trial addressed a question to Pilate that went to the root of this matter: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee?" This is the test of all true knowledge and especially of our knowledge of God and of Christ.

A Lone Speaker with a Rapt Listener

Jesus was now the only speaker. Nicodemus had become silent and sat as a rapt listener. Jesus rose to lofty and ever loftier heights. As he sat with this solitary hearer in the silence of the night he uttered some of his sublimest sayings. He spoke of his heavenly origin and his descent from heaven. He opened the Old Testament and drew a striking illustration from Moses. He threw wide the door of his salvation and made entrance as broad and free as "Whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."

Presently Jesus uttered that saying that is the richest and most splendid verse in the whole Bible: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is not wholly clear whether it was Jesus himself that spoke these words, or whether his reporter John was himself so caught up into the sublime strain as to utter them. But no difference, the thought and message are those of Jesus himself. This sweeps the unbroken horizon of salvation. It mirrors the whole sky of redemption, thickset with stars. It gathers up all the notes of the gospel and strikes them in one rich massive chord. It is full of infinities and eternities. It is ineffably bright with divine love, and yet it is edged with divine wrath. Heaven is in it, and so is hell. Had we only this one utterance of Jesus and verse of the Bible, it would have virtue to save the world.

Jesus ended the interview with the practical admonition, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Truth is ever a foundational fact in the teaching of Jesus. He shares and reflects the verity and veracity of God in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light," said Jesus to the man that came to him by night, a possible hint that he should have and that we all should come publicly by day. So ended this notable interview with this notable rabbi. Did he ever come to Jesus? We find him again at the tomb, "he that came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes and spices." He has come out of the night into the day.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus by night?
2. May doctors of divinity in our day misunderstand Jesus?
3. Does the mystery of the new birth act as a bar to the experience of it?
4. Why do we need to be born again?
5. How does traditional knowledge differ from personal experience?
6. What great truths are contained in John 3:16?

XLIII

WHAT WAS THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS?

After his interview with the woman of Samaria Jesus passed on up into Galilee to Cana, where a wedding was being celebrated at which his mother was present and to which he with his disciples was invited. By this act Jesus set himself in bold contrast with his forerunner, John the Baptist. He was not a recluse and an ascetic, separating himself from his human kind, but was a man among men, mingling with all currents in the sea of life, touching all shores and sounding all depths. The Christian is not to keep himself out of the world, though he is to keep himself unspotted from the world. His boat is to be in the sea, but not the sea in his boat.

A Wedding Scene

This festal scene was in a home. There is something wrong with the home, or with the people in the home, when they have to go away from it to have a good time. However happy we may be elsewhere, there should be no place like home and thither should our tired feet ever turn for rest and peace. It was a wedding that Jesus sanctioned and graced by his presence on this occasion. This relation was formed and consecrated in Eden and should be kept intact and inviolable as the primary and foundational relation of the home and of the social organization. We unloose this tie and make it subject to change and release at every chance circumstance or whim of emotion at our peril and at the peril of society. The relation is often disordered and broken by sin, but it should be strengthened and enriched and beautified by true human love and Christian spirit. Jesus had no home of his own, but he came to bring joy into the homes of others and he is making all homes better. The ministry that ended with the cross began with a wedding, and this bright beginning was prophetic of its final fruitage in the eternal joy of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Wine That Failed

The joy of the occasion was suddenly halted. The wine ran short. Perhaps the arrival of unexpected guests had exhausted the moderate supply. The mother of Jesus, evidently an intimate friend of the family, saw the embarrassing situation and with delicate tact said to him, "They have no wine." The mother's gentle hint to her son drew from him what seems a strange answer, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." But there was no slightest discourtesy in the word with which he addressed her. His reply was an intimation that his power could not be used at the suggestion of another, even of his own mother, and that at the right moment he would act. The mother was satisfied with the answer and in a spirit of profound and beautiful trust she said to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." This is the bond that binds the Christian to Christ. We have attained the highest wisdom and surest guidance and securest peace when we simply know and do his will.

Water Turned into Wine

Presently the moment for action came. Jesus ordered six large water jars to be filled with water and then at his bidding the servants drew out and served it to the guests and it was found to be wine, even of the best quality. At some point in this process "the conscious water saw its God and blushed." The miracle raises both physical and moral questions. Into its inner mechanism we cannot enter, but it involves no more difficulty than other nature miracles of Jesus. Grant his deity and all his miracles become natural and easy. He did in a moment what the sun does in a month. As to this making and using of wine by Jesus, the fact stands. In explanation of the fact it is to be said that wine was used in Palestine as a table beverage very much as we use tea and coffee. There were no distilled liquors, and the climate permitted the use of wine without such results of drunkenness as prevail in northern climates. Times and conditions have changed, and the terrible evils of intemperance in our day have made it expedient for us to prohibit intoxicating beverages altogether. It is a "noble experiment," and "new occasions teach new duties."

Manifested Glory

"This beginning of his signs did Jesus, and manifested his glory." Glory is shining excellence and goodness, and the glory of Jesus was seen in this work of beneficence that ministered to the comfort and joy of men. He came into the world that the world might have life and have it more abundantly. His glory was seen in his transforming a common and coarse thing into a rare and rich blessing. Water changed into wine is a symbol of all Christ's transfiguring work. He transmuted the old dispensation of law and letter into the new dispensation of liberty and life. He uplifts slavery into freedom and paganism into Christian civilization. He transmutes sin into penitence, unbelief into faith, the vileness of wickedness into the beauty of holiness, and sinners into saints. All that Christ touches he exalts and ennobles. He brings out the best possibilities in men. Under his divine chemistry the wilderness of this world shall rejoice and blossom as the rose and become the new Paradise of God. In all these transformations is seen the glory of Christ, as in all the wealth and splendor of color on the landscape and in the sky is seen the glory of the sun.

Strengthened Faith

"And his disciples believed on him." Had they not believed hitherto? Yes, but now their faith was deepened and strengthened. Faith is a matter of degree and it grows through experience and confirmation. Andrew and Peter, John and Philip and Nathanael believed on Jesus down at the Jordan; but now, having seen this sign, they were sure of him. The roots of their faith struck deep into their souls. It is as we see the glory of Jesus shed abroad in the world, ennobling everything it touches, and especially as we experience it in our own hearts, that our faith grows trustful and masterful, and whatsoever he bids us we are ready to do.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is a miracle?
2. What is its relation to natural law?
3. Why did Jesus work miracles?
4. What was the special significance of this first miracle?
5. How can we reconcile this act of Jesus with our prohibition law?

XLIV

WHAT WAS THE FIRST SERMON OF JESUS?

ABOUT a year after Jesus closed his carpenter shop in Nazareth and went south into Judea, marvelous stories came floating back on the tide of returning pilgrims of his cleansing the temple and working miracles and appearing as the Messiah. Presently he arrived in his own village and there he opened his public ministry.

A DIFFICULT PLACE TO BEGIN

Nazareth was a specially difficult place for him to preach his first sermon. The people had known him from boyhood and he had known them. They all looked on him with curious and expectant eyes to see if he would fulfill the reports they had heard of him. We may suppose that he arose with the usual embarrassment of a young minister rising to preach his first sermon in his home church before his relatives and friends. Doubtless Mary had a mother's pride in her son. Jesus knew the delicacy and the danger of the situation, but he began his ministry at home, where every one's duty begins. "He entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and he stood up to read." He went according to his habit, and not according to the weather or his wardrobe or sense of convenience. He did not go or stay away according to his liking or dislike for the preacher or the service, but according to the calendar and the clock. The service was dry and dull and poor enough, but he went, not to hear men, but to worship God. The church may not suit us and the preaching be hopelessly uninteresting and dull, but if on this account we stay away from church we cannot quote in sanction of our course the example of Jesus.

THE TEXT

Jesus chose his first text from the prophet Isaiah (61:1-2). Having read the passage, he handed the roll of Scripture back to the minister and sat down, according to the custom, to speak. All eyes were fixed on him, and a breathless hush fell upon the congregation. Only a single sentence of the sermon is recorded, its introductory words, "Today hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." This introduction is short and goes straight to the mark. It is not one of those long prosy introductions that give one that tired feeling before any point is reached, if it ever is reached, but it leaps right into the heart of the subject. It illuminates the text with a flash of light; it gives an ancient truth a modern application; and it puts Jesus himself in the focus of the Old Testament and converges its rays on him as their burning center and glorious fulfillment.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

We could wish that more of this sermon or the whole of it had been preserved, but we are fortunate in having its text, for it is one of the richest Messianic passages in the Bible, striking all the chords of Christ's ministry and full of the music of the gospel. Each of its clauses is deeply significant. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me": Jesus did not hesitate to appropriate this description to himself; the Spirit that was given to the prophets in limited measure and fragmentary gifts was bestowed upon him in boundless fullness. "Because he hath anointed me to preach": the meaning is that Christ was set apart as one who is qualified for his work, as is the physician for his skilled service. "To preach good tidings to the poor": this is one of the glories of the gospel. "To proclaim liberty to the captives": liberty was a glad word to the Jews who were under the bitter bondage of Rome, and it is a word that showers blessings out over the whole world. "And recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." The world was then full of blind and bruised people, and they instinctively crowded around Jesus. His ministry was a path of mercy, bright and beneficent as a sunbeam. This was the social gospel in the fullness of its richness and power. All these points of light in the text poured their splendor on the day of Christ's coming and made it the acceptable year of the Lord. With such a text, the sermon must have rivaled the Sermon on the Mount.

Reception of the Sermon

How was the sermon received? "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth." This promises well for the congregation, showing that it was an attentive audience. A good sermon depends almost as much upon good hearing as upon good preaching. No doubt there is plenty of poor preaching up in the pulpit, but perhaps one cause of it is the lamentably poor hearing down in the pews. Yet there is something suspicious in this word "wondered"; it suggests mere admiration for the rhetoric and elocution, interest in the manner rather than in the matter of the sermon. One of the most barren results of preaching is for people to go out wondering at the sermon rather than worshiping Christ. The next suspicious point in the reception of this sermon was criticism of the preacher. "Is not this Joseph's son?" Appreciation quickly turned to depreciation. They began to judge the preacher by his parentage; they compared his profession of Messiahship with his pedigree and said the two did not match. Because they knew him so well, they thought he could not amount to much. A carpenter's son never could be a prophet. Then they demanded miracles of him merely for the gratification of their pride, and he refused such a profane demand and intimated to them that if they rejected the gospel it would be carried to the Gentiles.

Fate of the Preacher

This was too much for their pride and bigotry and the worshiping congregation suddenly became an infuriated mob and they hurried him to cliff to cast him down. This method of dealing with an unpopular prophet has not yet passed out of fashion. If we do not like the preaching, let us fly mad at the preacher. If the divine message strikes our pride, let us strike back at the messenger. If we cannot throw him down a cliff, perhaps we can throw him out of his pulpit; and if we cannot break his head, we may at least break his heart. Still, the matter may not be thus so easily ended. Silencing a man does not silence God. And even the persecuted preacher shall not be forgotten of heaven, for Jesus, protected by his own majesty from the murderous mob, "passing through the midst of them went his way."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Should all Christians be preachers of the gospel?
2. What are the points of a good sermon?
3. What kind of sermon do you like to hear?
4. Is the hearing of a sermon as responsible work as the preaching of it?
5. Are any preachers in our day driven out of town for faithful preaching?

XLV

WHY DID JESUS CALL TWELVE DISCIPLES?

Driven out of Nazareth, Jesus went down to Capernaum on Lake Galilee, which he made his headquarters during his Galilean ministry.

The Need of Disciples

Nothing is complete in itself and all things are related in interdependence. The meadow needs the raindrops, and the mighty sun must have the infinitesimal motes in the air to disperse and diffuse its light. The capitalist needs the laborer, and the architect and artist must have other men's hands to serve their brains. No man is so great as to be independent of helpers. Even the Son of God was no exception, and Jesus had to have disciples to help him in his ministry. His work was now growing and spreading and the time had come to call men to enter into his companionship that they might be trained to carry on his work after he was gone. Spiritual ideas cannot go naked through the world but must be organized in an institution with leaders and workers to serve as hands and feet, hearts and brains to perpetuate these ideas and ideals and give them concrete form and definite application. This principle is seen in all social organization. Jesus chose twelve men to enter his theological seminary to be under his personal instruction and inspiration, and had not this been done his teachings might have floated off on the air and died away. The choice of these men was the beginning of the church with its officers and ordinances and of organized Christianity. The church is thus the organized body of Christ in which he dwells and through which he works.

The Men Chosen

A list of the disciples is given (Matt. 10:2-4), and we scrutinize the names with interest. Some of these men had been called before, but this was their official and final call. Peter always comes first, and Judas last with a dark blot on his name. There are two and possibly three pairs of brothers among them. This is probably the most important list of names in the history of the world. These men were given a work to do compared with which winning battles and founding empires are of small consequence. They were to let loose a force that was to pervade all empires and shape all the future ages. Yet they were not great men, and there was not a man of genius among them. Not one of them belonged to the priestly or professional class. None was of noble birth, but all were obscure and comparatively poor. At least four of them were fishermen and some were expert in profanity. One of them was a despised tax collector, and one was a zealot, a kind of anarchist of his day. Jerusalem, the chosen city of God and proud university seat and capital of the country, the metropolis where were the aristocracy and scholars and hierarchy and temple, was not permitted to put one name in this immortal list. Verily not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty, were called, but God chose the foolish to confound the wise, and the weak to confound the mighty. And still God is calling men of all types and classes to serve him in building his kingdom. It is the most democratic institution in the world and is open to all who are willing to enter and serve.

Transformed Men

Yet these men, so poorly gifted and unlearned and weak in themselves, could do mighty things and shake and reshape the world through Christ who strengthened them. Their very simplicity, unspoiled by human philosophy, made them unobstructed channels through which the grace of Christ could freely flow in the fullest measure. The spirit of Jesus touched these men and made them great. Often has God, in choosing men for epochal visions and victories, passed by the noble and rich and learned and found humble souls born in obscurity and breathed into them his Spirit and told them first the message he sent them to tell the world. The charcoal needs only a rearrangement of its atoms to become a diamond. The rough block of marble needs only the sculptor's chisel to release an angel. The humblest men have in them divine possibilities. Any human soul needs only the transforming and transfiguring touch of Christ's spirit to become forever pure and beautiful.

The Disciples Were Sent Forth

These disciples, having been called to Jesus, were soon sent forth from Jesus. He appointed them that "he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast forth devils." The gospel in their hands was not to be a mere theory but a practical power. Part of this work has now been committed to physicians and the hospital has been erected as an annex of the church. This work of preaching and healing is now going on in our modern world on a vastly wider scale than ever before, and the gospel is proving itself the power of God unto salvation.

Their Compensation

What salary were these men to receive? "Freely ye have received," said Jesus, "freely give." Receive no money for God's grace, turn not the work of saving souls into an unholy traffic for gain. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to make money, either for himself or for his disciples, and at the beginning he laid the axe at the root of this tree. Few things are so ruinous to the ministry as an instinct for money and the love of personal comfort, and any suspicion of mercenary self-interest puts a blight on Christian service. Yet because the disciples were to make no charge for the grace of the gospel, it did not follow that they were to receive nothing for their support. Jesus also laid down the fundamental principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Ministers dare not charge for the grace of God, but they ought and must receive proper support while they are administering it. Water is free as it gushes up in springs and flows in streams, but it costs something to have it brought in pipes into our homes. The gospel itself is free, but it costs money to have it preached in our churches and sent out along missionary lines into the world. If these disciples did not receive proper reception and support, they were to depart and shake the dust off their feet against that city, and the modern preacher may sometimes find it his duty to do the same thing.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Must all founders of new movements have disciples?
2. What kind of men did Jesus choose as his disciples? Were any of them men of exceptional ability?
3. Do most great men come from the country or from the city?
4. Are there undeveloped possibilities in all of us?
5. What can transform us into our highest and best self?
6. In what sense are we called to be disciples of Jesus?

XLVI

WHAT WERE THE BEATITUDES OF JESUS?

The disciples having been chosen, the next step was to deliver the constitution of the new kingdom and announce its program. After a night spent in prayer, Jesus with his disciples met a great multitude on a hill back of Capernaum, and from that lofty pulpit delivered the Sermon on the Mount that has gone resounding through the world and after nineteen hundred years has lost none of his sweetness and saving power. It is truly a mountain sermon, overtopping all human teachings and breathing the air of heaven. It sets forth the spirit and principles and outcome of the kingdom of God in holiness of heart and life. The world has not yet caught up with its simplest requirement. Saturate society with this spirit and the world would be washed clean and the kingdom of God would be here. One day filled with it would be a bit of heaven.

Beatitude of the Poor

The first word of this sermon is "blessed," and this is a word the world wants to hear; but the second word is "poor," and this seems in flat contradiction with the first word and the world does not want to hear it mentioned. The theory of the world is that the blessed are the rich and satiated. But Jesus reversed this and declared that blessedness has its root in a sense of lack. Others located it outside in worldly possessions, but he located it inside as a state of the heart. The poor in spirit are those who realize their poverty of soul without righteousness and God; they do not measure their blessedness by outward wealth but by inward worth; they have that humble state of mind that makes them receptive of spiritual truth and grace. The blessing pronounced upon such souls is that theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It is only in such souls that this kingdom can come; for by its very nature it is shut out of hearts full of self-satisfied pride. The kingdom of heaven is a present reality of experience, and it includes all essential good things and abides amidst all the disorder and distress of this disjointed world.

The Beatitude of Them That Mourn

The next beatitude is even more paradoxical to the worldly mind: "Blessed are they that mourn." This seems to shock the universal human heart, for in every breast it shrinks from loss and sorrow; it finds its blessing in the wine of gladness and counts every day of mourning a blighted day. Yet there is a time to weep as well as a time to laugh, and the mourning may be the bitter root that will bloom into the fairest blossoms and grow into the sweetest fruits. As long as there is unforgiven sin festering in the heart there is cause for mourning that may issue in purity and peace.

As pearls are the product of the suffering of the shellfish, so the finest jewels of human character are distilled and crystallized out of the sorrows of the soul. "Had God not turned us in his hand and thrust our high hills low, we had not been this splendor and our wrong an everlasting music for the song of heaven." "They shall be comforted." Jesus came to give this comfort. He picked his steps among the sinful and sorrowing, and to all such his words were a gracious balm and his touch was healing and life. And still "the healing of his seamless dress is by our beds of pain."

BEATITUDE OF THE MEEK

The third beatitude pronounces a blessing on the meek. This also fell as a strange saying upon ancient ears, for in that age meekness was contemned as weakness, and might was worshiped as right. The Roman especially had small respect for a meek spirit and gloried in gleaming steel and martial might that could crush opposition, and he trusted to his good short sword to cut his way to power and make him master of the world. But Jesus stood bravely up in that world bristling with spears and calmly said, "Blessed are the meek." This Teacher was not subject to the limitations of his age and did not simply repeat the opinions of his day, but he was a Teacher for all time and uttered eternal truth.

Meekness is humility, gentleness and patience of disposition. It is not puffed up with conceit and ambition and pride; and so it is not easily irritated and inflamed, offended and angered, and thus thrown into a fret of disappointment and a frenzy of passion. It keeps self-possessed and cool and concentrates all its powers into pure purposes. Such a state of soul is in itself an inner fountain ever springing up into rich blessings.

Not only was this beatitude strange, but the reason Jesus gave for it was stranger still: "for they shall inherit the earth." How can this be? would exclaim the Jewish patriot, looking for an armed and conquering Messiah; and with what skepticism and scorn would the Roman in polished brass and glittering steel hear this prophecy? Yet the moral evolution of the world is more and more proving that meekness is might. War is disappearing before the peaceful march of industry and the barbarity of the battlefield will yet be vanquished by the growing spirit of brotherhood and peace. It is not the most warlike nations to-day but the most peaceful that are inheriting the earth. Meekness is might when it has just cause to fight, for then its strength is as the strength of ten because its heart is pure. The lowly Nazarene, who with legions of angels at his command never harmed the hair of a human being and did not even lift his hand in self-defense, was grandly right, and in the heart of that warlike age here laid down the foundation of national greatness as well as of individual blessing. Other beatitudes step into this line and it grows most paradoxical at its very end when persecution takes its place in the procession and asks us to believe that it brings blessing.

Strange Contradictions of the Maxims of the World

These are the beatitudes of Jesus. They are a strange contradiction to the maxims of this world, but they are heavenly wisdom. They have rough shells without, but are full of sweet milk within. They are shunned by the worldly mind that judges and is deceived by outward appearances, but the spiritual mind that penetrates to their core finds they are the eternal laws of blessedness.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is a beatitude?
2. What is a paradox? Are these beatitudes paradoxes?
3. Why did Jesus use such strange figures of speech?
4. Explain the real meaning of each beatitude.
5. Do we really believe these strange truths? How can we find out whether or not they are true?

XLVII

WHAT PRAYER DID JESUS TEACH HIS DISCIPLES?

Jesus himself prayed, stood so close to God that he could speak with him face to face, and therefore he could teach others to pray. He was at his best, so to speak, at this moment, and never from his lips issued grander, sweeter music than in this immortal prayer.

Dangers Attending Prayer

Prayer, the highest and finest state of the soul, is attended with some of its deadliest dangers, as snow-capped, sky-bathed mountain tops are swept with the fiercest of storms. One of these dangers is that of turning prayer into an actor's performance. The Jews observed stated hours of prayer—morning, noon, and evening—and these hypocrites took care at such times to be caught at some public place, such as a prominent street corner, where they would strike an attitude of prayer and pose and perform before the crowd. They would thus put prayer on as an actor's mask, and then with furtive glances slyly observe how their piety was impressing the public. That kind of prayer did not cease to be performed when the last Pharisee with his broad phylacteries and public attitudinizing passed out of the world. "An eloquent prayer," of which we sometimes read, may not be a prayer at all, but only an eloquent performance.

Vain repetitions are another danger in prayer against which Jesus warned his hearers, and we need to take care that our prayers do not degenerate or crystallize into set forms which are only mechanical grooves and thoughtless repetitions. There is no objection to set phrases and prescribed forms—they have their place and use—provided such forms are kept alive and meaningful with the devotional spirit.

The Model Prayer

The Lord of prayer now taught the people the prayer of the Lord. It is a model prayer of marvelous simplicity and comprehensiveness, helpfulness and beauty. The sentences are short and the words are the plain speech of the common people. There is not one theological word in it. The whole prayer contains only six petitions and can be slowly uttered in less than half a minute. How startling the contrast with many a prayer in the pulpit that may stretch its repetitious and wearisome length out to half an hour and even an hour. Yet this prayer sweeps heaven and earth in its range and grasp and leaves out no good thing. It contains the roots and germs of all worship and blessing.

The Keynote

Its first word strikes the keynote of Christian faith and theology. More than any other word the name Father tells us what God is, showering upon us the most charming memories and suggestions. It asserts his sovereignty and power and wisdom, and also his care and mercy and love. "Hallowed be thy name," is the first petition. We might think that we could have made a better start. Should not some pressing human need have been put in the conspicuous forefront of this prayer? But it begins with divine interest and looks straight away from human needs. The prayer, however, begins at the right point. Right relation with God is the central condition and foundation of all blessings. Reverence is the root of all virtue. Unless God be respected, the human soul has nothing to look up to, no ideal above it, no authority over it.

Along Heavenly Heights

So the prayer begins and moves along these heavenly heights. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." Will the prayer never come down to our human needs and hear our human cries? It is the mountain tops, however, that keep the valleys green, the sun shining above us that makes the earth blossom around us, and all our blessings come from above. The will of God is the supreme blessing for us. We sometimes think of his will as if it were a hard fate and heavy burden for us to bear, whereas it is the kindest and richest thing that can happen to us in the world and for the world. Nothing else could be half so welcome to us as the will of God if we only knew the depths and heights of the good it contains for us and will bring to us.

The Turning Point

The turning point of the prayer is at last reached. "Give us this day our daily bread." The prayer suddenly drops from the highest spiritual aspiration to our lowest physical need; in the midst of the holiest longings of the soul the human stomach has something to say and must be heard. All the material conditions of life, bread, health, prosperity, are rightly the subject of prayer. Religion covers all life from top to bottom. Yet our requests for our material needs should be kept within modest bounds for the necessities of life. Our daily bread and not a year's supply or rich food or an ample bank account, is all we are authorized to ask.

Bounds Back into the Spirit

"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Having descended to and lightly touched upon our bodily needs, the prayer quickly bounds back into the spirit and rises to heavenly things. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." The great fear of the prayer is not poverty or pain, but it shrinks from every slimy touch and stain. The prayer, pieced out by later hands, goes up to God for its fitting conclusion and climax, for all things human must end in the kingdom and glory of God.

Such is the model prayer, short, simple, comprehensive, laying hold of the greatest blessings and rifling heaven and earth for our enrichment. If we learn to pray after this manner we shall know what things we should pray for, and whatsoever we ask shall be done unto us. And such are samples of the Sermon on the Mount from whose slopes and summit have come down rivers of water for the blessing of the world. Of this water we should drink and live.

> Down from this Galilean mountain top,
> Rolled words that are eternal laws of life,
> More deeply grounded than its granite base;
> Flowed strains of sweetness that have power to set
> This inharmonious world in tune and cause
> Our jarring lives to grow to mellow music.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why did Jesus pray?
2. What are some dangers of public and also of private prayer?
3. Why is the Lord's prayer so short?
4. Why does it begin with divine interests and move along spiritual heights and only once touch our material life?
5. Is it right to pray for worldly things such as success and wealth?

XLVIII

WHAT STRANGE THINGS DID JESUS DO?

ON one occasion when Jesus was teaching in a house the people crowded around, blocking up the doors and the very street. Four men drew near, carrying on a bed a helpless paralytic whom they were bringing to the great Healer. When they drew near and found the way blocked up by the throng, they climbed up on the roof, tore a hole through the light thatch-work and let their man right down at the feet of the great Physician. Jesus forgave the paralytic his sin and sent him home carrying the very bed that had carried him. The people dispersed, some criticizing and others wondering, but all amazed, saying, "We have seen strange things today." What had they seen?

STRANGE EARNESTNESS

They had seen strange earnestness. The Pharisees and priests had become so conventionalized and cold in their religion that all the heat had been frozen out of them and they showed little warmth of human sympathy with their fellow men in distress. The four men that came bringing their helpless friend on a bed and let him down through the roof must have seemed strangely undignified in their zeal to these ecclesiastics. The four friends, however, were not thinking of their own dignity, but of the helplessness of their neighbor. Like the Good Samaritan who put the wounded Jew on his own beast, their consciousness was absorbed in him. As long as we are thinking of our own comfort and interest we are not likely to take much pains to help others, but when we become intensely conscious of their need we shall cast our own ease and dignity to the winds.

Christianity has ever been in danger of crystallizing into coldness and hardness. It starts warm and fervent and gives out heat and light and is little restricted by customs and propriety. But presently it becomes self-conscious and careful of form and fashion, and then it loses its freshness and force. Conventionality first cools it and then kills it. It hardens in its own mold and loses its power of adaptation and free and warm expression. It then may be necessary for some new spirit to be born in it to quicken its life. Wesleyanism must rekindle the fires on the altar of the Anglican church and the Methodists begin to shout their religious emotion. The Salvation Army comes with its beating drums and blaring trumpets and its uniformed lads and lassies on the street to shock staid church people out of their frozen formalism and orthodox respectability. Time and again has the church thus been disturbed if not scandalized by having new earnestness come to tear the roof off and get sinners near to the Savior.

A NEW METHOD OF RELIGIOUS WORK

Another strange thing seen on this occasion was a new method of religious work. The ordinary method of getting a man to a physician was to take him in through the door, but the extraordinary method followed on this occasion was to take him up on top of the house, tear a hole through the roof, and let him down. The people probably had never seen this done before, and the Pharisees and scribes, who were confined in their methods to a traditional ritual which could not be infringed upon or changed to meet any emergency, were shocked and scandalized at the irregularity and irreverence of the method.

We should ever be ready and apt to adopt new methods in our church work and Christian service. We are in danger of becoming so wedded to the old ways that we think they cannot be changed and that any new ways are unorthodox and sacrilegious. The history of the church is full of this spirit, and petty and ridiculous have been many little variations of old customs that have disturbed and even disrupted congregations and denominations. The old way may have been good, but when a better way may be had we are to drop the old and use the new. The simple principle to follow is that of highest efficiency. A new method is not to be adopted merely because it is new. If these four men could have taken their friend in through the door, it would have been folly for them to have climbed up on the roof. We are never to tear the roof off for the sake of doing some strange thing. This is the fallacy and the folly of religious sensationalism. Ordinarily let us go in through the door, but when a man is to be healed, if needs be let us go down through the roof though it creates a sensation and the people say it is a strange thing.

Discomfited Ecclesiastical Authorities

A third strange thing the people saw that day was the discomfiture of the ecclesiastical authorities. The Pharisees affected to be shocked at the procedure of Jesus in forgiving the man's sin and thought they had Jesus in a trap. His hour of judgment they thought was come. Sure enough it was come, for Jesus suddenly turned the tables on these critics and threw them into confusion as the paralytic took up his bed and walked off. Then the people were amazed at this strange thing. They had been accustomed to seeing the Pharisees having their own way, but they had been contradicted and refuted and had been shown to be standing in the very way of healing the sick and sinful, and the disclosure startled the people as a strange thing.

The same strange thing has often happened and may easily happen again. We expect the church and its ministers to be right, and they generally are. But they are human in their administration and on particular points and occasions they may be wrong. They have sometimes stood in the way of truth and righteousness. Misguided ecclesiastics have often done this very thing. We are not to worship the church or stand up for the infallibility of its ministers, but we have a right to test their wisdom. It would be a strange thing if they were not sometimes wrong.

Ministers themselves should be on their guard that they do not take themselves too seriously and try to impose their own forms and methods, ideas and spirit on the church and thus restrict its power and hinder its growth. They have often enough proved their fallibility and even their lack of judgment and good sense and should be ready to let others, with more originality and progressive spirit than they, have some liberty and impart some new life to the church.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is conventionality in religion and what are its dangers?
2. Are there dangers in going to the opposite extreme of sensationalism?
3. Why are we so easily discouraged in removing obstructions in the way of our religious work?
4. Are ministers and the church often unfairly criticized?
5. Should we be easily offended even by such criticism?

XLIX

WHAT NEW THINGS DID JESUS TEACH?

"What is this?" the unfriendly Jews asked after hearing Jesus. "A new teaching!" they exclaimed. Jesus, then, was himself a teacher of new theology in his day. He did not keep to the old paths of the scribes and Pharisees, but boldly struck out into new paths. He revised and rewrote the religious creeds of his time and started this process of ever bringing religion up to date down through the centuries.

It is true that there is a changeless element in the changing forms of religion. The fundamental principles of religion do not change, but only our understanding and application of them. The new astronomy interprets the same heavens as the old, but in a truer and grander way, and the new science of medicine is only the old science corrected and made to fit the facts more closely. It is the same gospel we preach, but its interpretation and application are ever new. What new things did Jesus teach?

Spiritualized the Old Testament

Jesus used and revered the Old Testament, and yet he revised it and brought it up to date. He recast all its teachings in his own forms of thought and life. Much of it did not suit him at all and he sloughed off these obsolete and incongruous materials and selected what fit into his own teaching. Deeper still, as we have seen, he did not hesitate to cut into its text and teaching and criticize it. Jesus boldly corrected Moses. Six times he does this in the Sermon on the Mount, quoting the Mosaic legislation and then declaring, "But I say unto you" something different; sometimes deepening and spiritualizing the old law and sometimes flatly contradicting it (Matt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). Christ contradicts Moses! There it stands plainly written in the record. The old was too narrow for him and he broadened it; it was too external and he turned it inward; or it belonged to a lower ethical level and he lifted it to a higher plane.

Thus Jesus put himself above the Scriptures and made them subservient to himself. As he was lord of the Sabbath, so was he also lord of the Scriptures. He modernized the Old Testament into the New, or extracted the essence and seed of the Old and developed it into the substance and flower of the New. He spiritualized the Old Testament at a stroke when with one magnificent utterance and gesture he swept off the mountain top of Zion the temple with all its Old Testament ordinances and pageantry. He released the worship of the Father from a local habitation and cult into the freedom of the spirit and let it out into universality; no matter about the time and place. He took off its swaddling bands and started it out on its own feet; he unloosed it from the rocky crag of Judea that it might spread its wings and soar around the world.

THE GROWTH OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

Jesus taught and illustrated the vital fact that religious truth is a growing thing that must ever absorb new sustenance and produce finer fruits. His parables and teachings in which he likened the gospel to seed embodied this truth. The seed absorbs out of the soil and shower and sunshine the elements that enter into its growth and blossom and fruit. As the soil and climate change, so in some degree does the fruit change also. The size and texture and flavor of the fruit vary with the habitat and may vary widely when the seed is transplanted to a different country or continent. The plant is also subject to cultivation and may be greatly improved in a more congenial environment.

The analogy of the gospel to seed implies that it will be subject to like changes. This fact is abundantly illustrated in the history of Christianity, which has produced many types, Greek, Roman Catholic and Protestant. The first century had its peculiar type, and so has the twentieth and so will the twenty-fifth. Some are suspicious and fearful of these varying types and would like to repress them and cut and conform them all to their own pattern as hedges are trimmed, but they are as inevitable and necessary and good as are varieties of trees and flowers and fruits.

Christianity will necessarily continue to be shaped and colored by its soil and whole habitat, as in foreign missionary lands and churches, and thus it will be progressively adapted to each successive age and country. The world could not live to-day on the coarse grasses of the early geological ages, and our Christian faith could not survive on the low ethics of the early books of the Old Testament, or on many of the religious ideas of the first Christian century, or on the superstitions of the Middle Ages, or on the science of the fifteenth century. In such a soil and climate the gospel seeds we are now sowing would wither and die. All this is implied in the truth Jesus taught and so luminously illustrated that religious truth and Christian faith are growing forms of life.

Room for Coming Truth

More remarkable still, Jesus expressly left his own work and teaching unfinished and provided for its future continuance and growth. "Jesus began both to do and to teach": he only began, he did not complete. And he definitely announced, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Here Jesus stands as the Son of God "above the heads of his reporters," above all the ages and speaks to all coming time. This is a clear disclosure of endless vistas of truth yet to come. But the disciples were not ready for and could not bear it then and some cannot bear this growing new truth yet. This recognizes the principle that the revelation of truth is necessarily a gradual process and must not be crowded on growing minds too fast. Too much light may blind the eye; too much fuel may smother the fire. All that Jesus said was only a hint of what he might have said and of what he is now saying as he reveals himself in all the growing truth of the world.

"A new teaching!" must we still exclaim as we see the infinitude of truth unfolding in our day and see how it all converges on the expansion and illumination of the supreme spiritual realities which Jesus disclosed and which are the light of the world. He kept the old in its essential truth and then enlarged it as he unfolded it into new and richer flower and fruit.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Do we need "new teaching" in religion?
2. In what sense was Jesus a teacher of new theology?
3. Why is the church so sensitive on this point?
4. How did Jesus treat the Old Testament?
5. Why did Jesus leave his teaching unfinished?

L

WHAT WERE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF JESUS AS A TEACHER?

ALWAYS in connection with the teacher arises the question of his qualifications. In our schools from the primary grade up to the university, teachers must present certificates proving their ability and preparation and competence to teach. What certificate can Jesus show?

THE JEWS EARLY RAISED THIS QUESTION

This question arose early in the ministry of Jesus and was asked by the Jews themselves. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" "What college has he been to, that he should teach us?" Jesus had never been to either of the two famous colleges in Jerusalem through which the scribes passed and had received no instruction outside of the village school and synagogue. He had come up out of despised Galilee, sunk in illiteracy and boorishness, and was teaching with evident popularity and power in Jerusalem, the university city and intellectual center of the Jews. How could this be? The Pharisees and scribes pinned their faith to book learning. In their view, everything worth knowing had been thought out and written down by them "of old time," and nothing remained to do but to repeat this over and over again. Any originality of thought or variation from the old orthodoxy was viewed as new heresy to be ruthlessly suppressed. Jesus astonished them because he had none of their professional learning and yet spake as never man spake.

THE LEARNING OF THE SCHOOLS

A high place must be given to the learning of the schools. If we were to disparage colleges and universities, libraries and laboratories, the very stones would cry out against us. Our highly complex civilization is largely built by technical knowledge and professional skill. It is absurd to suppose that just any man off the street could go into a steel mill and manage it, or into a hospital and perform a surgical operation, or into a pulpit and preach. Men must be trained for these skilled services, and the professional school is the normal place to obtain such preparation.

But a danger attends such learning. Its tendency is to become conventionalized, professionalized, fossilized. It may become filled with pride and grow exclusive and intolerant toward all who cannot show an official diploma. Presently it may be found obstructing and rejecting new light, and, if not marveling, then sneering at a new teacher, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Illustrations of this fact occur in every field, and many of the great inventions have been produced by outsiders and great poetry has been written by men who, like Robert Burns, never saw a college. The man of the schools may be an artificial fountain with such knowledge as has been poured or pumped under pressure into him. The man of native gift is likely to be untrammeled by traditional rules and regulations, free from professional prejudice and pride, hospitable toward innovation and progress, and works things out in his own way, putting on them the stamp of his originality and individuality. This man does not need to go to artificial fountains in schools and books, for he has a well of inspiration within himself ever springing up into new life. The man of artificial rules is useful in his way, but it is the man of native gift and power that pours forth living streams and keeps the world green.

JESUS AN ORIGINAL FOUNTAIN

Now Jesus was not an artificial fountain but a living spring. He did not have his religious experience forced into him by schools and books, but it gushed up within him and was a living well of water in his own heart. Of course Jesus did not despise books and schools, creeds and catechisms: he knew these things and he used them; only they were not his masters but his servants. He read them and then corrected them and brought them up to date. He even boldly contradicted "them of old time" and did not spare Moses himself! Yet his main authorities were not books and schools, but experience and life.

Where does the poet go to get his poetry? To spelling books and grammars and dictionaries? No, these would not make a poet in fifty years. He goes to nature and life, to trees and grass and sky and to the human life that surges around him and wells up within him, and he simply puts down on his pages what his poetic eye sees and his sensitive esthetic nature feels.

Jesus was a teacher of this original intuition and experience. He did not go for his knowledge of God to books of theology about God, but he went to God himself, and in fellowship with the Father he learned the secret of his character and will and ways. "My teaching is not mine," he explained to the Jews, "but his that sent me." His knowledge of faith was not derived from a psychological analysis of faith, or from what others said about it, but from the faith he exercised in his own heart. His knowledge of immortality was not deduced from speculative hints and hopes, but from his actual experience of eternal life. This deep, fresh, inner fountain of experience was the secret of his marvelous teaching, though he had never been taught.

We Should Have the Same Kind of Knowledge

We can and ought to have in a degree the same kind of religious knowledge. We have so many schools and books and hear so much about the importance of creeds that we are in danger of confusing these means of life with life itself. "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee?" the question Jesus put to Pilate, goes to the root of our religious experience. Important as are books and creeds, their tendency is to turn us into artificial fountains so that only that which has been put into us will come out of us. "If any man willeth to do his will," said Jesus, "he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God." Then our religious life will not be forced through us, insipid and stale out of books and creeds, but will gush out of us in streams of living water.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is the value of a college education?
2. What is the comparative value of native intelligence and of acquired learning?
3. What are the qualifications of a good teacher?
4. How did Jesus acquire his qualifications as a teacher?
5. Can we all be teachers of the Christian life and spirit?

LI

WHAT WERE THE METHODS OF JESUS AS A TEACHER?

Jesus was supremely a teacher and his methods were masterly exhibitions of the true principles of teaching.

Adapted His Teaching to His Hearers

Jesus understood the primary art in teaching of adapting his teaching to the mental contents and state of mind of his hearers. He never talked to people about things above their heads and beyond their experience, but fitted his teaching right into their personal knowledge and needs. He never asked them to sit under his teaching in passive unthinking receptivity so that he could pour his opinions into them, but he stirred up their mental self-activity by appealing to their own intuitions and reasoning and judgment and thus led them to think with him to a common conclusion. He took them into partnership with himself in his teaching so that it was a mutual process and its conclusion a joint product. Often he would say to them, "What think ye?" or "What man of you?" and thus he submitted the point he was making to their judgment and was willing to leave it with them. Thus he did not override those who were objecting to his teaching with his authority, but patiently reasoned with them, stirred up their own mental processes and worked out conclusions together with them.

An Expert Questioner

The question has ever been the teacher's main tool in probing the minds of his scholars and opening them up to light and knowledge. Socrates, the greatest teacher of Greece, was simply a walking interrogation mark and with its sharp point he punctured many a fallacy or pricked a bubble of conceit. But Jesus was a greater master still of this art and it was one of his chief means of proving truth and exposing error. He frequently met one question by asking another and thus forced the inquirer to face and answer his own question. He especially used this method in his contests with the Pharisees and scribes who came to him with cunningly devised traps in which they were themselves ensnared in the unexpected turn he gave to the situation by a counter dilemma. When they came to him with their catch question about paying taxes to Cæsar he caught them with their own coin, and he completely upset them with their question fearfully and wonderfully contrived about the woman who had had seven husbands and then mercifully died herself, by his simple answer, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," and thus floored them out of their own Bible. The people enjoyed these contests of their conceited and pompous doctors of divinity with the young Nazarene. He delighted to play with them and keep them puzzled and wondering what he would do next. His keen rapier was too swift and keen for their antiquated bludgeons. It was generally a sorry day with them when they met him. Yet Jesus never aimed simply at getting the better of his opponents, personal victory was not his objective, but he used his dialectical skill only as a means of ultimate good.

A Master of Illustration

Jesus was a master of illustration and drew his illustrations from all sources. Especially did he draw them out of his own life and experience running back to his childhood days. He was a keen observer and lover of nature and communed with it and saturated his soul with its mystic beauty and teaching and constantly embroidered his sermons with quotations from sky and earth and sea. So also his knowledge of human nature and life that came out so richly in his illustrations was drawn from his experience and was often the product of the unconscious education he had picked up in the homes and streets of the village. His parables are pictures of the daily experience of his hearers which brought his teachings home to every one's bosom and business. To farmers he spoke of sowing and reaping, of wheat and tares; to fishermen of casting nets and sorting the fish and finding the pearl of great price; to tax gatherers of exacting no more than was due; to soldiers of doing violence to no one. The whole world of nature and of human life was alive to Jesus with illustrations; forest, vine and flower; fishing boat and kitchen utensils, plows and harrows, were eloquent with spiritual truth and glittered with illustrations as the morning grass with dew. It was this art that made his teaching, in contrast with the dull and dreary droning of the scribes and Pharisees, so fresh and interesting so that the common people heard him gladly.

MASTER OF PARABLE AND PARADOX

Jesus was also a master in the invention and use of the parable, which is a picture of the truth, a dramatized expression of doctrine and duty. He was almost the inventor of "the short story," and some of his parables, such as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, have never been surpassed in this field and form of literature and have passed into the general literature of the world. By this means, also, he was able to veil the truth in a form that was plain enough to those who had affinity and were in sympathy with it and yet did not give alarm and offense to its enemies. He was also master of the paradox, or seemingly contradictory statement or one that seems to run contrary to common sense. His beatitudes are of this nature and many others of his sayings. The purpose of such speech is not to state a real contradiction or any form of untruth, but to arouse the mind with a sharp sense of surprise or question of doubt or opposition. It thrusts a probe or shoots a flash of light into the mind that challenges attention and thought. It punctuates discourse with a sharp point that stabs the listless mind awake. It is still a rhetorical device that nearly all writers use for this purpose, and some of the most striking and brilliant writers, such as G. K. Chesterton, have a degree of genius in its invention and use.

These and other methods in the teachings of Jesus attracted and held the attention of his hearers and have made him to this day the supreme teacher of the world. They caused his hearers to exclaim, "A new teaching!" and so do they challenge us.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why was Jesus mainly a teacher?
2. What are the points of a good question?
3. What was wrong with the questions of the Pharisees?
4. What are the points of a good illustration?
5. Why did Jesus use parables?

LII

WHAT MADE JESUS AN INCOMPARABLE SPEAKER?

OFFICERS of the Jewish Sanhedrin sent to arrest Jesus came back without him but with the report, "Never man spake like this man," and in so doing they unconsciously pronounced upon him a eulogy that still shines as a bright jewel in his crown. What are some of the points in which Jesus stands unique and unapproachable among men as a speaker?

SIMPLICITY

His speech was marked by simplicity. Specialists invent technical terms to express their ideas and thus develop a vocabulary that may be unintelligible to unitiated readers. Theologians are much given to framing their teaching in terms that are not understood by the common people. Great preachers have been distinguished by their freedom from such terms and by their simplicity of style. Jesus was preëminent in this art. His sermons were expressed in the vernacular of everyday life. He talked about religion just as he talked of fishing and farming so that the common people heard him gladly. It takes a trained intellect to understand Plato or Leibnitz, but a peasant or a child can understand Jesus, and this simplicity has been a powerful factor in sending his words over the world.

Originality

The teaching of Jesus was marked by originality. Most men simply repeat what others have said and has become the common stock of knowledge. A really original mind that creates new truth and kindles a great intellectual light in the world is exceedingly rare, perhaps not more than one in a hundred or even a thousand years. Jesus was preeminently an original teacher. Although the germs of his teaching can be found elsewhere, yet he was strikingly original in his independence and intuition. He repudiated mere traditional teaching and struck out new forms of truth. His independence of spirit was magnificent, and he was thus the pioneer and paragon of all those that would think for themselves. He looked directly into the heart of truth and then simply reported what he saw.

Reality

The teaching of Jesus was marked by reality. Much of our religious speech is infected with unreality in the form of exaggeration, heated imagination, personal bias and partisanship, self conscious coloring or conceit, and especially of cant which consists in saying things which have become orthodox and conventional but which we do not really know and feel. Jesus never said anything simply because it was orthodox or because his hearers believed it and expected him to say it; he never uttered a word simply for effect. His hearers felt that he was saying the simple truth and there was no escaping it. Our teaching and preaching are in constant danger of slipping off the earth and escaping up into the air, whereas we should keep it down on the ground and make our religion as real as our business and bread.

Sincerity

The speech of Jesus was marked by sincerity. Human speech is a very subtle medium of expression and is quick to catch the faintest coloring of the soul. If there is any insincerity, deception, selfish or sinister purpose in the heart, however deeply it may be hidden and deftly it may be concealed it will affect the voice and ooze out through the very features of the face. No one can long be one thing in his heart and another thing with his tongue. "I cannot hear what you say," says Emerson, "for what you are." "No man," says Dr. James Denny, "can give at once the impression that he is clever and that Christ is mighty to save." He may do one or the other, but not both at the same time, because they are psychologically antagonistic and mutually exclusive. Jesus was a great soul unified with absolute sincerity. With him heart and tongue, thought and words were one, and his speech came out as a solid and glowing stream that flowed, mighty as a river yet gentle as a rivulet, into the hearts of his hearers and out over the world.

Universality

The speech of Jesus was marked by universality. All men are subject to the limitations of their age, race, and thought. Plato was always Greek, Luther was German, and Lincoln was American. Paul was a Jew in the texture of his thoughts down to the last line he wrote. No man can jump out of his own skin or escape out of the envelope of the age in which he was born. Jesus Christ did escape these limitations and belongs equally to all ages and classes and conditions of men. He was no parochial schoolmaster, but, standing on the shore of Galilee, the earth was his amphitheater and humanity his audience. He did not tie himself up with any temporal condition or theory, scientific, political, social or religious, but he uttered universal truths that are just as true and adapted to conditions in our day as they were in his day. His essential teachings never go out of date and become obsolete because they contain timeless elements.

Efficiency

Never man spoke like this man in efficiency. All really great speakers have been great doers. They spoke and shaped their words into swords and shields and empires, into fortune, fame and immortality. Greek orators spoke, and Asiatic hordes staggered back in confusion from their coasts. Roman generals spoke, and a world empire rose around the Mediterranean and turned it into a Roman lake. Luther spoke, and the grip of papal despotism was broken. Napoleon spoke and the Alps fell flat and the boundaries of empires oscillated on the map. Lincoln spoke, and the fetters of the slave were shattered. Jesus Christ spoke and the kingdom of God began to rise in the world. He spoke and old empires were lifted off their hinges and the stream of the centuries was thrown into new channels. He still speaks, and at his bidding ministers and missionaries go forth to preach his gospel to the ends of the earth. He speaks, and our whole civilization is being troubled and transformed with a new spirit that will yet build the city of God on earth.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is an effective style in speaking?
2. What is the comparative value of the substance and of the style of a speech?
3. What is the main thing about a speech?
4. What were the chief features of the speaking of Jesus?
5. Can we in some degree acquire these points and how?

LIII

HOW DID JESUS DEAL WITH JOHN'S DOUBT?

John the Baptist had been in prison about a year in a lonely fortress down by the Dead Sea. Jesus was up in Galilee, moving around in villages with a few disciples. John fell to musing on the situation, and, as a result, a painful doubt began to grow in his mind as to whether Jesus, whom he himself had introduced and vouched for as the Messiah, was indeed this Prophet.

Causes of John's Doubt

Several causes had produced this result. John was in prison and had fallen into a prison mood. Hope does not burn brightly there. No wonder that in that damp and dusky place the world looked dark to John and the checkered shadows on the stone walls turned to ghostly specters. This was the state of things inside the prison: what was the state outside? Dark enough in itself to produce doubt. Up in Jerusalem the Pharisees were strangling the life out of religion with their bigotry and hypocrisy. Up in Galilee the court of Herod Antipas was living riotously and flaunting its scarlet sins shamelessly before the people. And what was Jesus doing about all this? Apparently nothing: only going around and preaching inoffensive little sermons in fishing towns and country villages. Where were the axe and the fan and the fire that John himself had promised the Messiah would bring? They were not in evidence. On the contrary Jesus had turned out to be patient, tolerant, mild, genial. He had abandoned Jerusalem and seemed unconcerned about Herod and his court; he had apparently forgotten his forerunner lying in the Black Tower down by the Dead Sea and was content to spend an easy life talking to insignificant fisher folk. A genial Christ was not what John wanted: that fiery prophet wanted a Christ that would come with axe and fire to chop things down and burn them up. Under the convergence and pressure of all these conditions John began to doubt the very Christ whom he had introduced with high hope and promise. That John doubted Jesus is the astonishing fact that stands out in this narrative, and it is an honest book that boldly writes this damaging fact down on its pages.

What Did John Do with His Doubt?

What, now, did John do with his doubt? He did not brood over it until it hatched out the serpents of unbelief and bitterness and hatred of all things good. He did not allow his doubt to destroy what faith he had in Jesus and sink into despair. The man that deals with his doubt in this way is doing an unfair thing and is driving his doubt into starless night. John sent a committee to Jesus, asking, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" He did not consult his disciples who were bringing various discouraging reports about Jesus; much less did he take counsel with the Pharisees, the enemies of Jesus, or with the Sadducees, the agnostics of the day; but he sent directly to Jesus himself and asked him for further light and gave him a further trial. This is the first course to pursue with our doubts. Doubt is a bad thing when it drives us away from Christ, but it is good when it sends us to him for further facts and light.

What Did Jesus Do?

How, now, did Jesus deal with John's doubt? He said to John's messengers: "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see." This is a remarkable answer that blazes out upon the pages of the Gospels like a burst of light. It contains no harsh judgment upon John, or slightest trace of impatience with him for his doubts. Christ never dealt unkindly with anyone for doubting him, such as his own disciple Thomas, and he will not be hard on us for our doubts if we will only take them to him.

Go and tell John the facts, said Jesus. He did not send word to him that his doubts were damnable and that he should stop his thinking and hush them up. This has been a favorite way of dealing with doubt in some quarters. Some ecclesiastics down to our day have been very much afraid of thinking on the part of the people and have tried to discourage and stop it. But this is not the spirit of the Bible which urges us to prove all things and try the very spirits whether they be of God. Jesus did not stop John's thinking, and mental death is not the cure for doubt to this day.

More remarkable still, Jesus did not undertake to do John's thinking for him. Why did he not give a plain and positive yes to John's question and thereby relieve him of all responsibility and perplexity in settling this question by settling it for him? Because this is not Christ's way and it is not God's way. It is a way that presents plausible pleas and attractions. It seems so plain and easy and conclusive, and it has often been tried. The Pope kindly offers to do all our religious thinking for us and there are in all our churches plenty of little popes or ecclesiastics who would be glad to perform for us the same service. Why not have the church fix and finish our creed down to the last letter and then simply accept it on its dogmatic authority? Because our minds will not let us and God does not want us to do this.

So Jesus did not tell John to do less thinking, but he gave him additional facts and light and told him to do more thinking and work out his own answer to his question. Jesus is not afraid of reasoning in his disciples: he only wants them to reason enough and reason their way through to right conclusions.

WHAT FACTS DID JESUS SUBMIT TO JOHN?

Jesus told John's disciples to go and tell him what they had seen: the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, the dead raised and the gospel preached to the poor. These were not theological arguments but gracious works. They were self-certifying evidence. These works are being wrought in our day on a vaster scale. The character and deeds of Christ match and prove his divine claims and mission. That white Life that grew up out of the hard barren soil of that selfish world must have had a divine root that never was born of earth. His magnificent march of mercy down through these Christian centuries is a mighty fact. His sayings are self-evident truths, which are not dogmatic deliverances but spiritual laws that work in our lives as Newton's gravitation works in the skies. Thus Jesus boldly trusted this matter to John's judgment, and so does he trust us.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is doubt?
2. What other Bible characters had doubts?
3. Did Jesus ever have any religious doubt?
4. When is doubt good and when is it wrong?
5. How can we cure our religious doubts?

LIV

HOW DID JESUS BREAK WITH THE PHARISEES?

"WHY do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread?" The question thus put to Jesus by the Pharisees and scribes does not seem to raise any vital point or portend any serious consequences; yet it is the spark of fire that kindled into a white heat the whole issue between him and them; it was the first gleam of the dagger with which they meant to pierce his heart. Here Jesus breaks with the Pharisees and this point marks the beginning of the end.

A CEREMONIAL REQUIREMENT

The washing of hands, to which the Pharisees referred in this question, was not the ordinary cleansing of the hands, but a ceremonial requirement of the most complicated kind. Before eating, the hands had to be washed by an elaborate process involving many precise ways of holding them and pouring the water on them and letting it drain and drip off, which had to be most meticulously observed. There were twenty-six rules for this rite in the morning alone, and to violate or neglect them was declared to be a sin as bad as adultery or murder and worthy of death!

It is easy to see what would become of the spirit of religion when caught in such a system: it would be constricted and strangled to death. The outer material form gradually buried and crushed the inner spirit. More and more care and importance were attached to the mechanical acts and less and less to the spiritual states. Not only so, but the mechanical form came to be used as a deliberate means to kill off spiritual life and as a mask to hide all manner of wickedness. While the Pharisees were punctilious and ostentatious in observing their own traditional inventions and were ready to persecute even unto death any one who dared to neglect them, they were robbing widows, refusing to support their aged parents and reveling in all manner of iniquity. They were like sepulchers outwardly white but inwardly full of dead men's bones. This has ever been the tendency of ceremonial religion.

The Answer of Jesus

What did Jesus say in answer to this apparently innocent question as to the practice of his disciples? It seemed only a trivial point of personal habit, but he discerned its true import and far reaching consequences. It was a critical moment with him; he stood facing a temptation as perilous as that which assailed him in the wilderness. His kingdom was at stake, and he faced the Pharisees as boldly and unflinchingly as he did the devil. "And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" He then charged them with having set aside and violated one of the Ten

Commandments of Moses, even the one bidding them to honor father and mother, with their cunning devices, again denounced them for having "made void the word of God because of your tradition," and quoted Isaiah against them. It is true that he observed and instituted simple ordinances himself, but these were only means to an end and not the end in itself. His kingdom did not consist in meat and drink, ordinances and ceremonies, images and incense and all the gorgeous spectacle of the stately temple or cathedral, but in righteousness and peace, a pure heart and right life.

A Turning Point

The answer he gave that day was a turning point in his ministry. It shattered the whole Pharisaic system and made him a terrible heretic. From that hour he was a doomed man in the eyes of these ecclesiastical authorities. So deeply were they wounded that the alarmed disciples said to Jesus, "Knowest thou not that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" Well did Jesus know this and know the price he would have to pay, but he calmly answered, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." He was teaching not simply for that time, but for all time, and he foresaw the final victory.

The Place of Tradition

Tradition has its place in religion, as in all things else. It stores up the accumulated experience and wisdom of the past and hands it down to us as our precious inheritance. The race would never get forward if every generation had to begin at the beginning. The Bible itself is simply so much tradition: it is the religious experience of the chosen people as recorded and interpreted for us by prophets and apostles. As such it is of immense value to us, saving us from fighting our way up out of barbarism and heathenism and planting our feet on the summits of Christian truth and attainment won by illuminated holy men. Jesus himself used tradition.

He did not cast away all that had been said and done by Moses and Isaiah and begin anew, but he adopted and adapted their materials; he introduced his religion, not by revolution, but by evolution.

Limits and Dangers of Tradition

Nevertheless, tradition in religion has its limits and dangers. It is to be used as so much valuable material building, but not as a fixed and finished structure. It furnishes us with seeds and roots, but these are not to be kept from sprouting: they are to be made to grow into their proper flower and fruit. When tradition is used as a bond to bind our brains and constrict our hearts, when it becomes an artificial system of human invention and not a vital breath of the Spirit, then we are to break through it and trample upon it that we may win our way to liberty and our right to grow. Tradition, however ancient and sacred, must always be tested by growing truth and living experience.

This break with the Pharisees marks the practical end of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee. He presently closed his work in the north and started on his final journey to Jerusalem. His popularity had passed its peak and he was now facing the cross.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Who were the Pharisees?
2. What were the chief points in their religious creed and life?
3. How did Jesus deal with them?
4. Are there any modern Pharisees?
5. What is the nature and place of tradition in our religion?

LV

WHAT DID JESUS SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

We are always interested in what great men say about themselves, intensely curious to pry into their minds and see how they evaluate and account for their own genius and power. In what light does Jesus stand as revealed in his own consciousness?

Declared Himself the Messiah

Early in his ministry he made a momentous revelation of himself to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well when, in answer to her reference to the coming Messiah and her declaration that "he will declare unto us all things," he calmly said, "I that speak unto thee am he." Jesus thus put himself at the focal center of the Old Testament and at the luminous point of its great promise of a coming Messiah, or One anointed as the Savior of the world, and declared that he was this coming One. He fulfilled the prophecy that was the central hope and glory of Israel and stepped upon the stage of divine providence and history as the hope of mankind. He said this without any unwarranted assumption or presumption but simply as his own inner knowledge of the fact. It was no more presumption for him to say this than for the sun to let its light shine or for the day to unfold its dawn or the summer its wealth of fruitage and beauty. It was the simple truth he declared to that solitary hearer and woman of questionable character, and all his ministry and the ages have confirmed his own consciousness and declaration.

From Above

Another self-revelation flashing out of his own consciousness was his declaration, "I am from above." He was placing himself in contrast with the Jews and all human persons in declaring, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." He came from a heavenly world and stood at a higher level than the people of this world. Again he was only speaking the simple truth and was no more indulging in vain boasting than is anyone who sincerely and correctly evaluates himself. He could not deny or obscure his higher origin and nature without concealing the truth about himself. This world did then and does yet lie immeasurably below Jesus Christ in his nature and character, personality and power. No sane human being would dare put himself on a level with him. Great skeptics acknowledge this. The agnostic John Stuart Mill said: "Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as an ideal representative and guide to humanity; nor even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than the endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."

ONE WITH THE FATHER

Jesus rises to a still higher revelation of himself when he declared to the Jews, "I and my Father are one." He now identifies himself with God in a way no human being would think of doing or dare do. We may not penetrate into the secret and mystery of his relation to the Father, but he clearly transcends human relations with God. He speaks of the glory he shared with the Father before the world was and, "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God," he proceeded to perform a lowly service, even the washing of his disciples' feet. He said that "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" and thus revealed himself as the incarnation of God, God come down into human limitations and made visible in flesh and blood. Christ is the supreme and perfect manifestation of God: what Jesus said and did God said and did and all that he is in character reveals God as the light reveals the glory of the sun and the flower untwists and discloses the inner nature and beauty of the sunbeam. We now know God as the Christlike God and this is the fullest revelation and the supreme glory of God that he is like Christ. It is also the supreme glory of Christ that he is like God, and in him both God and Christ are revealed in their highest nature. The Christlike God and the Godlike Christ mutually reveal and fulfill and complete each other.

A World Magnet

Jesus further disclosed his nature and mission in declaring: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." "But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." The cross was a revelation of the inner nature and love of God such as is nowhere else found. The majestic pageant of the night sky and all the suns and systems rolling over us tell us much about the all-powerful Hand of God, but little of his Heart. The cross is a rent in the garment of God's eternity showing us the great wound he has borne even from the foundation of the world in sorrow and sacrifice for human sin and for the redemption of mankind. This is the love with which God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. Jesus is now lifted up before all the earth and is drawing all men unto him. Even those who may not know or do not receive him are drawn to him by mystic cords that they know not. More and more is the world gravitating to and kneeling around that cross as its only redemption and healing from its sin and sorrow.

The Resurrection and the Life

Jesus made a supreme revelation of himself when he declared at the edge of the grave: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." Jesus himself rose from the dead and stepped out of the rocky jaws of his empty tomb and liveth forever more. He conquered death and took captivity captive and with him will lead many sons to glory. No other Savior wears this crown and he stands clothed with supreme honor and glory and he assures us that as he lives we shall live also.

Many are the lines of evidence and rays of light that converge upon Jesus to reveal him to us in his inner nature and mission and power, but these "sayings" of his bear the marks of self-evident sincerity and reality and truth, and we trust them and him and know whom we believe and are sure that in following him we do not walk in darkness but have the light of life.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Give some of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah.
2. In what sense is Jesus from above?
3. Explain the meaning of the names, The Christlike God, and The Godlike Christ.
4. To what extent and in what ways is Jesus drawing the world unto himself to-day?
5. Was it proper for Jesus to give these evaluations of himself?

LVI

WHAT MOMENTOUS DISCLOSURE DID JESUS MAKE TO HIS DISCIPLES?

At the end of his ministry in Galilee Jesus with his disciples went up into the north into a quiet region with the object of having a close private interview with them and making a momentous disclosure to them.

His General Question

When they were far from the busy scenes in which they had been moving, Jesus put to them the question, "Who do men say that I am?" This question is still throbbing in the heart of our civilization. First asked by an obscure Galilean in that far off solitude, it has come thundering down through the ages and is still one of the greatest and most urgent questions in the world to-day. Ideas determine life and in the long run rule the world. What men think is the inner force that shapes what they are and do. The theories that are generally held with reference to government, industry, wealth, art, morals and religion mold society in all its forms, as the hidden life of the tree fashions every leaf and bud. What men think of Christ is a master force in our modern world and fundamentally shapes its life.

The disciples gave the various answers men were giving. The answers differed, but they all agreed that Jesus was an extraordinary person, at least a prophet, a mysterious personality containing an element of the superhuman. Men are still giving various answers as to Jesus, but they all take high ground as to his character and work. The answer that he was a myth, or a dupe, or an impostor is no longer tolerated. Even the great skeptics, such as John Stuart Mill, see something in this man that they cannot explain and they pay tributes to him that fall little short of divinity. Renan, skeptic as to the supernatural, ends his life of Jesus, of surpassing charm in its literary beauty, with these words: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that, among the sons of men, there is none greater than Jesus." Charles Lamb said to a company of friends: "If Shakespeare should enter the room we should all rise; if Jesus Christ should enter, every one would kneel."

THE PERSONAL QUESTION

Jesus now turned the general into the sharp personal question, "But who say ye that I am?" Important as is the general question, far more important to each one is this personal inquiry. No one can escape its keen particular point. A neutral attitude is impossible. Whatever we say or do is a decision, and this decision will go deep down and far out into our lives. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," exclaimed the impulsive Peter. For once Peter was grandly right. He hit the truth at the center. His great confession exalts Christ as the Son of God, lifting him above humanity into divinity. Instantly the great confession was crowned with a great blessing: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." This rock is Peter as uttering this great confession, Christ himself being the chief corner stone, and all believers are thus foundation for those that come after them and build on them.

The Fateful Shadow of the Cross

And now across the path of the disciples for the first time clearly fell the fateful shadow of the cross. From that time Jesus began to part the veil of the future before them and show them things to come. He saw his path running straight to Jerusalem into the murderous hatred of the priests and Pharisees; beyond their hatred he saw the terrible cross with its outstretched arms waiting to clasp and crush him in an agony of death in their bloody embrace; and beyond the cross he saw the power and splendor of the resurrection morning. Jesus had spared his disciples this painful disclosure until they were able to bear it, and God often hides things from us in mercy and reveals them to us only when we are ready for them and can stand the strain.

Impetuous Peter could not endure this disclosure and broke out in the exclamation, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." This was just like Peter, unloosing his self-restraint and speaking unwisely with his tongue. The plan of redemption unfolded by Jesus was not to his liking and he proposed to stop it! How true is this to Peter's shortsighted vision and impulsive nature.

But Jesus made short work with Peter's presumption. He unmasked him as an agent of Satan and bade him from his presence; he showed him up as a stumblingblock in the way; he exposed the root of his folly in a worldly mind. Never had such withering words from the lips of Jesus fallen upon poor Peter, but he richly deserved the reproof. This is what comes of our attempting to hinder God's ways and reshape his plan and put finishing touches on his work.

We frequently slide down into worldly views and utter foolish speeches.

The Cross Held Steadily in View

Jesus was not to be turned aside from his duty and his cross by any suggestion or temptation, a temptation that started in the wilderness and dogged his steps to the very last. That cross was no accident or surprise or disaster interrupting his life and work, but was a central and integral part of it, its goal and climax. He took his disciples up into the wilderness to break the news to them and gird them up for this coming trial; and no doubt he strengthened his own will for the supreme sacrifice as he did in the garden of Gethsemane when for a moment it wavered. He had now set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem and thither he would go. The way of the cross is the way of Christ and is not the way of the world. "Then said he unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why did Jesus withdraw into a quiet region for this interview?
2. What estimates are men giving of Jesus to-day?
3. Why is the personal question of what we think of Jesus so important?
4. What was the cross which Jesus foresaw?
5. What cross must each one of us bear?

LVII

WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS?

The unexpected and startling revelation made to the disciples of his coming death must have shrouded them in deep gloom: it seemed the utter disappointment and destruction of all their hopes. They needed a glimpse of the divinity that was hidden in Jesus and of the glory that lay beyond the cross to disperse the darkness and sustain and inspire them; and possibly Jesus himself, as he drew near his passion, needed a fresh assurance of the Father's presence and love. The transfiguration met this need. It shot its splendor through the gloom and kindled despondent faith into new strength and joy.

Unloosed Inner Glory

Jesus with Peter and James and John, his most intimate and trusted disciples, climbed the mountain slope to a place of prayer. It was night and Jesus engaged in communion with the Father. Presently the disciples were aware that a mysterious change was being wrought in the dim and dusky figure of the Master. His face began to shine and his clothing to emit gleams and sparkles of light. The strange luminosity grew into effulgence until his countenance was radiant and his raiment dazzling white. His whole person seemed steeped in splendor, a glory from within was streaming through the veil of his flesh.

There is a mystery here whose border we may not cross. There were divine possibilities in Jesus of which this transfiguration gives us a glimpse and hint. It would seem that his divinity was hidden by the veil of his humanity and that for a moment the inner glory was kindled and burned through. In a weaker degree Moses was transfigured when, after his forty days of communion with God in Sinai, his face shone; and they that looked on Stephen at his trial "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Of Daniel Webster it is recorded that, for several hours after he had delivered his great oration at Bunker Hill, his face wore an indescribably grand expression that awed those who came into his presence. Character carves the countenance. Sydney Smith said of Francis Horner that the Ten

Commandments were written on his face. "Human physiognomy," says Victor Hugo, "is formed by the conscience and the life, and is the result of a multitude of mysterious excavations." Some people have become so sanctified by the Holy Spirit that they wear a heavenly aspect and are verily transfigured into the likeness of Christ.

Visitors

Two visitors from the heavenly world now appeared upon the scene, Moses and Elijah, themselves shining with glory, and talked with Jesus. Few facts in the gospel story are more significant. Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, the prophets, are here associated with Jesus, the Messiah whom they foretold and prepared the way for, thus binding the Old and New Dispensations into unity. Redemption is the same through all ages and forms one plan. Immortality is here brought to light. These are travelers returned from the other world, clothed in the same bodies transfigured with light, prophetic of the resurrection body. They were in possession of the same faculties and speech so that death and heaven do not change the essential constitution and individuality of the soul. They talked with Jesus about "his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," so that redemption is still a subject of interest in heaven. If the heavenly inhabitants are so interested in this redeeming love, they must find it a subject of greater glory than all the starry spaces and splendors through which they pass, and there is no greater and worthier subject that can engage our minds.

Cloud and Voice

A cloud now overshadowed them and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." The cloud was a symbol of God's presence, but one that hid him from view; the voice was the voice of the Father setting his seal on his Son. The cloud concealed and the voice revealed. The cloud shut the mystery and intolerable splendor of the face of God out of sight, but the voice brought him near and declared his will. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing. He always hides much from us that we could not bear, but lets us know enough to have a clear path for our feet. The simplest fact, blade of grass or grain of sand, conceals mysteries that run infinitely beyond our power to penetrate into them. The atom is now a universe of wonder in itself, and the constellations and spiral nebulæ sweep off into infinite spaces and deeps that appall the very astronomers that discover them. The Infinite and Eternal jewels his garments with these burning suns and systems, and who by searching can find him out? "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of him." Yet amidst all these mysteries and deeps there is always a plain path in which we can walk. Great as is the mystery of God, vast as is the cloud in which he conceals himself, yet out of the very heart of the mystery comes a clear voice, "This is my beloved Son: hear him."

Silence and Service

The voice died away in the silence, the cloud melted into the invisible, and Jesus was found alone. The transfiguration glory had vanished from his person and he was his ordinary self. The vision splendid had faded into the light of the common day. They descended from the height of ecstatic rapture, where one cannot permanently stay, to the plane below to heal an epileptic boy. Jesus transmuted that great white splendor on the mountain top into a shining stream of mercy to heal sick and troubled people and to irrigate the wilderness of the world and make it rejoice and blossom as the rose. This is the final meaning and use of the Transfiguration. Splendid visions and fine emotions are vain unless they are carried down to the plain and transmuted into sympathy and service.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What transforming power does the mind have over the body?
2. Is our inner life in some degree reflected in our facial features?
3. Give other ways in which God conceals and also reveals himself.
4. What is the clearest revelation of God?
5. Should we talk about our own religious experience?

LVIII

WHAT WAS THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS?

WE have reached the Passion Week in the life of Jesus and enter upon its final scenes. So important and precious are its events that nearly one-third of the Four Gospels and one-seventh of the entire New Testament are devoted to this one week.

PALM SUNDAY

On the morning of Palm Sunday there was a stir in Bethany and along the road leading to Jerusalem. It was understood that Jesus was to enter the city that day. His disciples were eager to celebrate his kingship and he probably permitted the demonstration as an acknowledgment of his royal right, though he knew how futile would be this means of asserting or recognizing it. Jesus rode on an ass, the humblest of creatures, and the disciples carpeted the dusty roadway with greenery and their own many colored garments, while their hosannahs rang out over the hills. The procession would not have compared with the triumphal entry of a returning Roman conqueror, but it meant more for the world. As the summit of the Mount of Olives was reached, the holy city broke upon the view. It is an impressive spectacle even at this day, but then it was one of the wonders of the world. The city sat like a jeweled crown on the brow of Mount Zion. In the foreground rose the marble walls of the temple of stainless whiteness, crowned with a flashing gilded roof, a mass of snow and gold; in the background stretched the streets and squares of the city, and over it all lay the spell of a thousand years of patriotic and sacred associations.

A Strange Interruption

When he saw the city, "Jesus wept." What a strange, incredible, unaccountable interruption of the festivities of the hour! How the disciples must have been amazed at his tears. Only twice is it recorded of Jesus that he wept: at the grave of Lazarus and on this occasion. In the former instance, as the word means, he shed silent tears, but on this occasion, as the word means, he wept aloud, he broke down and sobbed like a child. A child cries at a touch, a woman's tears lie near the surface, but a man's tears are buried deep and it requires some profound and overpowering emotion to unseal and break up their fountain. How could Jesus weep over Jerusalem, the chosen city of God? Let him go and weep great hot tears over apostate Samaria and pagan Rome, but over Jerusalem will he not lift his hands in benediction and join in the festivities of the hour?

Why Did Jesus Weep over Jerusalem?

Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem? First, because of its sinfulness. Any city is a pool of iniquity with depths of degradation that sink down into hell, and Jesus saw to the bottom of that city of a million people and the sight drew tears from his eyes. He also wept over it because it had rejected him. What is the deepest sin of any city? Not its social vice, for this may be a sin of frailty, but guiltier are its spiritual sins of pride and selfishness and hardness of heart. Jerusalem was chosen of God that it might prepare the way for and receive its Messiah, and now it was casting him off and getting ready to fall upon him in fury and crucify him on a cross, and this was the iron that most cruelly entered his soul. He also wept over the city because he foresaw its coming destruction when enemies would close in around it and slaughter would sweep through its streets and its children would perish and its very stones be ploughed up. Deepest of all Jesus wept over Jerusalem because he loved it. It was dear to him and often would he have gathered its children in his arms, but they would not. This is the deepest root of God's sorrow over the world: he loves it and so loved it as to give his Son for it.

What Did Jesus Now Do?

Having wept over the city, what did Jesus now do? Did he simply spill his tears on the ground and pass on unconcernedly? No, he turned his weeping into working, his tears into toil, his sympathy into service, and his sorrow into a great salvation. Some people like to indulge in sad emotions as a kind of sentimental luxury and even like to cry, provided it does not cost them anything. But such superficial emotionalism is weakening and may wither the heart into dust. Emotion is good only as it imparts motion to the will and moves it to practical worthy action. Jesus, having wept over the city, went over into it and up into its temple and drove out the thieves and robbers and faced and condemned with splendid bravery and scorn its principal offenders, the doctors of divinity and chief men of the city: he cleaned up that town, and then he paid the price as he laid down his life outside that city wall for the redemption of all the cities and peoples of the world. In vain do we weep over our city unless we are also willing to pay the price of its redemption in service and sacrifice that may cost us dearly and even life itself.

What Came of This Day?

But what came of this day of triumphal entry that opened with such pomp and pageantry and promise of royal coronation? Nothing! Having condemned the priests, Jesus "left them and went forth out of the city." He retired to the seclusion and quiet of Bethany whence he had come that morning. The great day was over and nothing had resulted from it: Jesus was not yet king. And never will he be king by such means. Doubtless the disciples had had high expectations and thought the procession and banners and shouts would surely carry Jesus to his throne and themselves into the chief offices. Deep and tragical must have been their disillusionment, as ours will be if we overvalue such means. Still are we inclined to put our trust in outward signs and shows, even in "reeking tube and iron shard." But presently the pageantry passes and the shoutings cease and then we find that such means are futile in the spiritual world. Jesus himself entertained no such dreams and experienced no disappointment, for he knew that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why does the last week in the life of Jesus fill so large a proportion of space in the New Testament?
2. Is Jesus now passing through the world in a triumphal procession?
3. Was it weakness in Jesus to weep over Jerusalem?
4. Do we ever weep over the city in which we live?
5. What should we do about the condition of our city?

LIX

WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE REQUEST OF THE GREEKS TO SEE JESUS?

CERTAIN Greeks were in Jerusalem during this Passion Week and having heard Jesus they found Philip, a disciple with a Greek name, and requested of him, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip seems to have realized that this apparently ordinary request was fraught with more than ordinary significance and so he reported it to Andrew, another disciple with a Greek name, and these two disciples reported the request to Jesus.

Its Extraordinary Effect

So far this incident suggests nothing unusual. People were frequently seeking interviews with Jesus, and these Greeks were only two or three people more. What significance attaches to this request, why report so trivial an incident? But trivial incidents may be the germs of tremendous consequences, as the first acorn contained all the oaks in the world. The moment this request was reported to Jesus it produced upon him a profound effect. Hardly any other incident in his whole ministry moved him so deeply as this. Instantly he exclaimed, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified!" What bearing has this strange exclamation on the request of the Greeks, what is the psychology of this mysterious answer?

These Greeks Were Suggestive

These Greeks were suggestive. To the common eye they would have been only a few strange looking foreigners, but to the prophetic imagination of Jesus they were radiant with significance and opened a wonderful vision of glorious possibilities. These Greeks were Gentiles, pagans from the great world outside of the chosen people. They represented the pagan world at its best, its most brilliant and cultured race.

What were these Greeks but the forerunners of a great multitude that would come to Christ out of the world from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south, the first fruits of a vast harvest that was to be gathered out of every land and clime? A single drop of rain that comes splashing down on the hot dusty earth may seem altogether trivial in itself, but it derives immense significance from the fact that it is the first drop of a copious shower that will saturate the thirsty ground and gladden every living thing. The first tiny green blade that pushes up through the clods of the wheatfield rejoices the heart of the farmer because he sees it is the pioneer of a million other blades that will shoot up through the pores of that field and presently cover it with golden grain. One thing is not one when it is the forerunner of many things.

Jesus rejoiced in these inquiring Greeks because he saw that they were the budding prophecy that pledged him the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. With prophetic vision he saw himself in possession of this inheritance and out of his exultant consciousness he exclaimed, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." We need such faith that in small seeds we may see the promise of great harvests.

THE JOYOUS CONSCIOUSNESS OVERSHADOWED

Suddenly this joyous consciousness of Jesus was changed and swept into a shadow. The painful thought came to him that except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. Again we may wonder at the turn in his thought. What was the connection? He saw the cost of the great victory that he had just envisaged with a sense of triumph. How was he to gain the world? He knew that he was already rejected by the Jews. Might he not now go with these inquiring Greeks out into the Gentile world and try his fortunes there? Might not the intellectual Greeks, so reasonable and so religious, give him a readier reception than had his own people? Might not his journey through pagan lands be a march of triumph that would bring the nations into his kingdom? And might he not thus escape the dreadful way of the cross?

Did any such perilous thought beat against his mind and heart at this hour? Did Satan again offer him all the kingdoms of the world if he would forsake the slow agony of the cross and follow this apparently shorter and easier faith?

The devil in his temptation in the wilderness only left him "for a season," and has he here returned? When he goes away he is always ready to come back.

The Alluring Vision Rejected

Certain it is that Jesus cast any such alluring vision down on this occasion, as he did in the wilderness. He clearly foresaw that not by thus saving his life could he save the world, but only by losing it could he win his kingdom. The grain of wheat with all its wealth of nourishment and golden beauty must be buried in a grave and perish that it may shoot up in a green stalk and blossom and multiply itself a hundredfold. Nature is full of such sacrifices. Life always costs life. The strong must suffer for the weak and the good for the bad.

This principle reaches its highest expression in our human world. This is the meaning of motherhood. The parent must sacrifice for the child, and one generation for the next. Our liberties are the costly victories of many battlefields. All our inherited blessings are the transmuted blood of countless ancestors who suffered and died for us. If no more grains of wheat fell into the ground and perished there would be no more sheaves of wheat; and if there were no more lives laid down for others in this world there would be no more harvests of human welfare.

The Highest Expression of This Principle

This principle reaches incomparably its highest expression in the cross of Christ. Had Jesus forsaken the cross and gone with these Greeks in the hope of winning the world without sacrifice, we should never have heard his name. That grain of wheat might have been saved, but it would have remained alone and never would have sent a harvest down to us. But because Jesus fell from his cross into the grave, his Life is now springing up in our life and is everywhere enriching the world.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. How did Greeks come to be in Jerusalem?
2. Was it characteristic of Greeks to wish to see Jesus?
3. Was it a tempting thought to Jesus to go to Greece?
4. What would have resulted had Jesus gone with these Greeks?
5. Are we ever tempted to forsake our duty and try some other work?
6. Name some of the ways in which sacrifice is woven into the web of the world.

LX

WHAT WAS THE LAST TABLE TALK OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES?

JESUS with the Twelve had gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem for the Passover. Judas went out from the supper to betray the Master, and Jesus announced that he would be with them only a little while. All were troubled as the shadow of the cross crept over them, all except the Master: he remained calm and strong. In this hour he engaged in his last confidential table talk with them in which he spoke words that shine like a rainbow on the dark cloud of the coming crucifixion, that floated out of that storm in immortal music that will ever comfort the world.

COMFORT FOR THE TROUBLED

"Let not your heart be troubled" is the fundamental theme that is interwoven through all the strains and chords of this grand symphony, the melodic germ that blooms into this matchless music. Sorrow, of course, must pour itself out in grief and tears, the wounded heart must bleed. But Jesus gives profound and powerful reasons for an untroubled heart in such a time. "Believe in God" is the tonic note of this comfort, the corner stone that can sustain the intolerable weight of this weary world and shape it into peace.

When we know that God reigns we know no atom can slip out of its place, that no creaturely will can thwart his purpose, and that all things work together for good to them that love him. "Believe also in me" is the second chord growing out of and completing the first. Christ is the manifestation of God, revealing his heart of sympathy and love. Therefore faith in God finds its logical completion and crown in Christ. Trust God and trust Jesus—this is the cure for all our trials and sorrows, a song in the night that can sing and soothe our troubled souls into peace.

Many Mansions

The Master now wove this primal faith into triumphal chords of hope. "In my Father's house are many mansions." He opens the door into the other world and shows us that it is not a dark void where our conscious life is lost in oblivion, but a many roomed, many storied house, a grand mansion where our Father makes his home and has room for us. "If it were not so, I would have told you." Of course he would, for he always told the truth. Would he leave us under any delusion on so vital a fact as the future life? No, his whole life and character are pledged to tell us the truth on this point, and here also we can trust him. "For I go to prepare a place for you." Wonderfully suggestive and comforting are these words. Jesus Christ has not vanished into nothingness, but has gone to a place. He knew whither he was going and simply stepped through the door into his Father's house. Since this earthly world has been builded so grandly and embroidered and sculptured and painted so richly and gloriously, what a world of beauty will not that heavenly place be where the redeemed dwell through endless time with the spirits of just men made perfect and with Jesus?

An Interruption

At this point occurred a strange interruption. Jesus assumed that his disciples understood where he was going and how he was about to depart, but bewildered Thomas spoke up and said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how can we know the way?" The frequent misunderstanding of Jesus by his disciples, especially the way in which they misinterpreted his spiritual teaching in the light and terms of their material hopes, is one of the pathetic things in the Gospels. Thomas' question elicited the answer, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." The way is the path of conduct in which we are to walk; the truth is the light of guidance falling upon our path; and the life is the vital energy that urges us on and the end to which the way and the truth are the means. This way and truth and life are all found in Jesus Christ, and in following him we shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

A Pathetic Cry

This drew from Philip the pathetic cry, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Another instance of blindness in the disciples. It would seem that Philip could hardly have been listening to what Jesus had just been saying, or he would not have missed its point. "Show us the Father" is the universal cry of the ages. The most hideous idol of wood or stone has in it this great truth that it is the feeling of some human heart after God if haply it may find him. The most confirmed agnostic or scoffing infidel cannot wholly suppress the stirring of this instinct, the silent yearning of the soul after the Father, and very pathetic are many of their confessions on this point. Philip's exclamation was received by Jesus with almost painful surprise: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" How long shall we be with Christ, in the presence of his teaching and example, and yet not know the Father? Then Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This is one of the greatest sayings of Jesus, full of the profoundest truths and comforts of the gospel. All the fatherly qualities of Christ, his personality and sympathy and love, came out of God as the light out of the sun disclosing the central splendor of its heart, or as a blossom blooms out of a plant revealing its inner nature of sweetness and beauty.

CONCLUSION

Jesus went on in his table talk, giving his disciples further promises and pledges of his presence and power, touching on many of the deepest things of his kingdom, and closing with his great intercessory prayer, with its final declaration and pledge to the Father, "I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them." And so all the strains of this immortal music are gathered up into this closing note and grand climax of all his speech, the mighty Amen! that sets his seal to all his teachings and promises. Where now was the darkness of sorrow that was enveloping his troubled disciples? Lost in the splendor of these words and promises of their Lord. He had taken the surgings of the storm and transposed and transfigured them into these triumphal chords. So may the sorrow of earth be composed into the music of heaven.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is table talk?
2. Why were the disciples troubled?
3. What is the greatest cure for trouble?
4. Do we often misunderstand Jesus?
5. Does the whole world cry for the Father?

LXI

WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

ORDINANCES are dangerous, but we must have them. They are material symbols of spiritual realities, the body that enshrines and manifests a soul. They are necessary as crutches to support our imagination, pictures that visualize the invisible things of the spirit. The danger attending them is that we may substitute the material symbol for the spiritual reality, the painted window obscures or shuts out the light, or the image of Christ in the window takes the place of the spirit of Christ in the heart. Judaism was overloaded and encrusted with ordinances and symbols, but Jesus discarded all but two, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both were used in Judaism, but he spiritualized them.

A Startling Announcement

In the evening the little company gathered in the appointed place and the Passover meal began. As they were eating the disciples were startled by the sudden announcement of Jesus, "Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me." The unexpected declaration filled the disciples with alarm. Such baseness excited their horror. And they began to say unto him one by one, "Is it I?" The form of their question was good. They did not point the finger of suspicion at one another and say, "Is it you? Is this baseness lying coiled up in your heart?" This was true self-examination and was their best safeguard. Our first impulse often is to think others worse than ourselves, and we impute to them evil we never suspect may be in our own hearts. We need to keep in close acquaintance with ourselves and never assume that we may not be guilty of the same sins we see or think we see in others.

The Bread and the Cup

"And as they were eating, he took bread." The Lord's Supper was not an abrupt creation but a further evolution. The new ordinance grew out of the old and was the fulfillment and perfect blossom of the past. Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfill, and Christianity is not a new religion but the final outgrowth and fruitage of the old faith.

These few simple verses are one of the most deeply significant and precious passages of Scripture. Here we are on holy ground and our meditations should be pervaded with tender reverence. The emblems are rich in ideas and spiritual associations. The great central idea is that of sacrifice. The cross has a blood red heart. The broken bread represents the broken body and the poured out cup the shed blood of Christ. The scarlet thread of sacrifice is woven into the whole web of the universe. The very limestone rock on which the cross stood was composed of the tiny bones of countless myriads of animals that gave up life that that cross might stand. The wheat is ground up that it may impart its life to higher life. The mother lays her life on the altar of motherhood, and the father will sacrifice his life for his wandering boy. These are but drops of sacrifice out of the heart of God. The supreme instance of sacrifice is the cross of Calvary on which the Father offered his Son and the Son freely gave himself for the redemption of the world.

Another great idea in this ordinance is that of food for the soul. The bread passes into the blood and is assimilated into tissue and reappears in the strength and beauty of the body. The soul has its hunger and must have bread or die. Christ is the bread of life that cometh down from heaven. He satisfies our hearts and is assimilated into our spirits and reappears in the strength and fruitfulness and beauty of our lives. Another idea in this ordinance is fellowship. It is the "communion" of the Lord's Supper, communion with him and with one another. "We, being many, are one bread and one body." Here all divisive lines should converge and melt into the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Remembrance of Christ is another idea at the center of this ordinance. Only as we remember him will we keep his spirit alive in our hearts and will the world know him and his name not die. These and many other ideas are expressed in this bread and cup.

SIMPLICITY OF THE SYMBOLS AND DEPTH OF THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

These outward emblems are simple and unadorned, frail and evanescent, but their meaning is deep and rich and eternal. The significance of any sign is not to be measured by the nature of the sign itself. The flag of our country is only so much silk or cheap muslin, presently fading into a rag, and yet what a mighty meaning does it carry with it wherever it floats, representing the law and order, the power and majesty, the history and glory of a great nation. A little lock of hair carefully preserved, a little old shoe well worn at heel and toe, may seem to the careless eye of another to be of slight significance, but to the bereaved mother they suggest thoughts and memories that are too deep for tears. So this bread and cup may seem common and insignificant, even outworn superstition, to the world, but to the believer they are precious, suggesting thoughts and memories and hopes that the world cannot give or take away.

A GLEAM OF PROPHECY

The ordinance also has in it a gleam of prophecy. It looks back upon the past in remembrance, but it also looks out upon the future, "till he come" in that day when Christ will "drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." It thus links Christ's first with his final coming. How slender and frail seems the thread and yet how long it has lasted and will last. How perishable the elements and yet how imperishable the memorial! It is one of the oldest things in the world and will yet outlast all the fabrics of human hands. It must have in it some substance and vitality that cannot die. It has deep rich roots, but it has not yet come to its perfect blossom and ripe fruit. Full of meaning as it is in retrospect, fuller still is its prospect. These symbols are also shadows of things to come which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard. If we could discern the real meaning of this bread and cup, these elements would shine with the splendor of the celestial banquet hall, and as we receive them there would float in upon us the song of Moses and the Lamb.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What are religious symbols?
2. In what ways may we betray Jesus?
3. What was the meaning of the Passover?
4. What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper?
5. Why is the Lord's Supper so precious to Christians?

LXII

WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF GETHSEMANE?

AFTER the closing hymn of the Lord's Supper, Jesus and his eleven disciples, Judas having left the Twelve to carry out his traitorous plot, went out of the city near midnight across the Kedron to the garden of Gethsemane on the west slope of the Mount of Olives. This Garden of Sorrow is the real battlefield of the cross. Gethsemane won the victory of Calvary. Out of this hour of agony and prayer Jesus emerged calm and strong for the final hour. We must win our battles before we come to them in secret prayer and gathered strength.

THE INNER GUARD

At the entrance to the garden Jesus left eight of his disciples and with the other three went on into the deeper shadows to engage in prayer. Prayer was his preparation for his passion. He wanted to see full and clear the light of his Father's face before he stepped into the final darkness. He sought to harmonize his will into perfect unison with the Father's will: he knew he could then bear the cross.

"And he taketh with him Peter and James and John." The three witnesses of the transfiguration also witnessed the agony in the garden. They saw Jesus on the mountain top steeped in splendor and they saw him in the dusk of the garden in an agony of bloody sweat and sorrow: by such scenes were they fitted to be witnesses for him.

Why did Jesus, leaving the other disciples behind, take these three with him? Partly as an inner guard against interruption, but mainly for the sympathy and support of their presence. They were the close circle of intimate disciples that understood him best and trusted him most. It was a beautiful but pathetic exhibition of the humanity of Jesus that in this hour of trial he wanted his dearest friends nearby. Their simple presence helped to sustain and comfort him; their shoulders were under his burden, he was so much stronger by reason of their added strength. Solitary suffering is doubly hard to bear, and sympathy is a wonderful support to lighten a burden.

A Mysterious Dread

When Jesus was buried deep in the seclusion and shadows of the garden a mysterious dread as the horror of a great darkness came upon him. He was "in agony" and "began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy and saith unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death." We cannot enter into the secret of this anguish, for it involves roots and relations that run infinitely beyond our understanding and experience; it is a burden and a weight of mystery of which we can scarcely touch the edge. Its deepest meaning was that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This was the agony that forced from the sensitive quivering flesh of Jesus great drops of blood and a pitiful cry of sorrow from his heart. This was the unspeakable cost of our redemption.

A Wonderful Prayer

Out of this garden floated one of the most wonderful prayers in the Word of God; out of this darkness and agony came strong trust and sweet submission. "Abba, Father":

"Abba," the Aramaic word for Father, is one of the very few literal words of Jesus that have come down to us, so that in this word we hear the very sound of his voice. "All things are possible unto thee": this is the strong ground of confidence prayer first stands upon. "Take away this cup from me": what a pathetic cry is this, how human it is! The cup of the cross was now becoming so bitter that Jesus instinctively prayed that it might pass from his lips. The humanity of the Son of God is here laid bare down to its shrinking quivering nerves. "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done": this was the strong sure check that Jesus put upon his own will, the invulnerable safeguard he threw around himself against unholy desires and ignorant petitions, the mighty rock on which he kneeled. "Thy will be done" is a petition that should condition all our prayers.

SLEEPING DISCIPLES

Three times Jesus returned to his disciples, whom he had asked to keep vigil with him, and found them sleeping. They were in some degree blameworthy and Jesus singled out Peter for a gentle rebuke. At his third return he said in calm tones, "The hour is come." The victory was won. Through prayer his will had been wrought into absolute unquestioning obedience to the will of his Father, the peace of God was upon him, the strength of God was in him, and he was now ready to be offered. "Rise up, he said: let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

THE BETRAYAL

Even while he spoke the multitude led by Judas appeared at the gate, and Jesus calmly went out to meet them. "Whom seek ye?" he asked them. "Jesus of Nazareth," they answered, to which he replied, "I am he." At this word the soldiers and priests and Pharisees and also Judas "went backward, and fell upon the ground." Was there ever a more striking instance of unconscious obeisance, a truer witness to the grandeur and majesty of the personality of

Jesus? Let the letters stand out in living light in this record that his enemies, Judas the traitor, bitter priests, proud Pharisees and even stolid Roman soldiers, at his presence went backward and fell upon the ground. No doubt conscience made cowards of them all, and the unexpected and startling apparition of Jesus at the gate of the garden in his calmness and bravery precipitated this sense of guilt and cast them prostrate before him. But his personality must have shone out of his appearance in impressive power. The starry radiance of his eyes, the lofty majesty stamped upon his countenance, the transparent truth and purity and peace of his soul, the calmness and poise of his bearing, all combined into a total personality that put a subtle and irresistible spell upon all those that came into his presence.

Judas then betrayed his Master to his enemies with a traitorous kiss, and "so the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Do we want to be alone in sorrow?
2. How does the sympathy of others help us?
3. What are some wonderful things in this prayer of Jesus?
4. May we fall asleep in mind and conscience as well as in body?
5. How is Jesus being betrayed to-day?

LXIII

WHAT WAS THE TRIAL OF JESUS?

CELEBRATED trials have often for a brief time taken the stage of history and some of them, such as that of Socrates, have held the attention of the world for centuries, but no other trial compares with that of Jesus in thrilling interest and permanent importance and it still holds to-day the center of the world's stage.

It was a complicated affair, falling into six parts, three ecclesiastical and three civil. Jesus was taken from the Garden of Gethsemane about midnight to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest, and then before the high priest and the Sanhedrin in an irregular trial by night, and again before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin in a regular trial in the morning where he was condemned to death. He was then taken before Pilate, as the Sanhedrin could not finally pass sentence of death. Pilate, after hearing the case, sent it to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, then present in the city, on the ground that Jesus was a Galilean. Herod returned the case to Pilate, who then passed the final sentence of death.

PILATE

The most momentous event in the governorship of Pilate, though perhaps to him one of the most trivial, was this trial. He doubtless looked on Jesus as a contemptible Jew possessed of some harmless fanatical delusion, yet had it not been for his accidental association with that Jew we never would have heard of this corrupt and cruel Roman procurator. He stepped into the presence of Jesus, as a mote floats into a sunbeam, and in that light stands revealed forever. He showed some disposition to deal fairly with his prisoner and made some feeble attempts to release him, but in the end he played the part of an unjust judge and a coward, and "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" is the indelible stigma of shame that has been affixed to his name.

When the Jews brought Jesus in the gray light of the morning to Pilate's judgment hall, they would not enter lest they should be defiled; for men may be intensely religious at one point while engaged in the deepest wickedness at another. Especially may they be punctilious in the observance of petty matters of ceremony while disregarding and trampling upon moral principles. Pilate inquired what accusation they brought against the man, and their indefinite and evasive answer was, "If this man were not an evil doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee." The charge on which they had condemned him before the Sanhedrin was that he had declared he was able to destroy the temple and had spoken blasphemy, but they knew such charges would have no meaning and force with Pilate and therefore did not mention them, but hoped that he would blindly condemn the prisoner at their instigation.

But this was not in accordance with Pilate's Roman ideas of legal procedure, and, as they made no definite charges, he attempted to throw the case back into their hands by telling them to take the prisoner and judge him according to their own law. This was Pilate's first device to shift his own responsibility and get rid of the troublesome Jew, and from this point on it is pitiful to see him tossed about in his indecision and cowardice, impaled now on one and now on another horn of the case, vainly trying to escape and yet mercilessly driven on by the murderous mob to a fatal decision.

Pilate's Interview with Jesus

Pilate now saw that he must look into the case and took Jesus back into the palace for a private interview. The Jews by this time had presented charges to the effect that Jesus was perverting the nation, forbidding to pay taxes to Cæsar and declaring himself a king—charges that were false but that they knew would be effective with the Roman governor. Pilate began his interview by inquiring of Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?" was the searching question with which Jesus replied. "Am I a Jew?" contemptuously answered Pilate. "Art thou a king then?" persisted the Roman governor. "Thou sayest," answered and affirmed Jesus. He did not look like a king as he stood there so pale-faced and wan with his visage cut deep and marred with lines of sorrow, and nobody thought he was a king that day—except himself: he knew.

Pilate then came out before the people and declared to them, "I find no fault in this man." We might at this point expect some just and noble action from this Roman judge, but he was now afloat on the turbulent flood of his fear hurrying him on to fatal action. He tried other devices to escape from his position and especially did he propose to the Jews the choice of releasing Jesus or Barabbas, a notorious robber, in accordance with the custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast of the Passover. He hoped they would release Jesus, but instantly the mob yelled back at him, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." This is what comes of putting Jesus Christ to vote. As between Barabbas and Jesus it is a question whether Barabbas would not still get the most votes. We need only scratch our own Christian skin to find barbarous blood, and the beast in us still yells for Barabbas and not for Jesus.

Pilate Seals His Doom

Pilate is now about to seal his own doom. Before doing this he tried to exonerate himself by a vain and foolish device. He took water and in the presence of the multitude washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it." Yet by the very terms of his declaration his hands were dripping with the blood of the righteous Man he was sending to his death and not all the multitudinous seas could wash them clean. Tradition pictured him as ever afterward walking in the mountains and wringing those blood stained hands. The people shouted back, "His blood be on us, and on our children"—an ominous prophecy. "And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required." So ended the trial of Jesus. Yet the case was not closed when Pilate delivered him to be crucified. This trial is still going on, and every one must record his verdict. In the words of Browning, Does Jesus have our vote?

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Give the different stages in the trial of Jesus.
2. Who was Pilate?
3. Why did the Jews make different charges against Jesus before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate?
4. Was Jesus guilty according to Roman law?
5. Could Pilate have released him?
6. In what sense is Jesus on trial to-day?

LXIV

WHAT WAS THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS?

CRUCIFIXION is a sharp and piercing word and is forever associated with the tragedy that nineteen hundred years ago was enacted outside the north wall of Jerusalem. The place was named Calvary in Latin, Golgotha in Hebrew, meaning a skull, and was probably a knoll of rock resembling a human skull, a fitting name for the deed done there. How eloquent of death is a skull! The delicate organs of sight and sound that were so expressive are utterly gone, leaving only dark caverns staring blankly around; the great golden bowl of the brain, once the seat of intelligence and affection and will and the home of all the high thoughts and aspirations of man, is empty and not even haunted with a ghost; and the tongue, instrument of all his eloquence of speech and song, is silent forever. So is man in his sin. It was fitting, then, that the cross should be lifted at Golgotha, the place of the skull, for it was to bear the guilt of sin and undo all its work.

THE ROMAN SOLDIERS

The soldiers in charge of the crucifixion dispatched the dreadful business with Roman thoroughness and stolid indifference. The cross, bearing its victim, was raised upright and dropped into the pit dug for it, and there, hanging on four great wounds, naked under a blazing sun, with wounds inflaming, fiery thirst raging, every nerve quivering and writhing with pain, the sufferer endured the mortal agony for one or even two days before death mercifully put an end to the scene. And through it all the soldiers and rabble mocked and jeered and tormented the wretched creature, even spitting upon him and brutally striking him as they passed by. This is what they did when "they crucified him." All the horror of this death burst upon him in flames of agony so fierce and terrible that in a few hours his life was consumed. Yet no spot of guilt was upon him, no secret fault was in him, but he was laying down his life for the life of the world.

How little these coarse and hardened soldiers realized the overshadowing significance of that death while they noisily rattled dice in their brass helmets and gambled over his clothes, their pitiful perquisites? Is it not even so to-day? How much of our bartering and living is but blatant wordliness and selfishness and mad pursuit of gain and pleasure in the presence of this cross? How seldom amidst all their bargaining and blasphemy do men in our marts lift their eyes to the gilded cross on their church or cathedral spires and let it restrain and lift them into holy praise and high endeavor?

UNCONSCIOUS EULOGIES

A furious mob raged like an angry sea around the cross. There were the preachers and elders of the church, Pharisees in their ostentatious piety, Sadducees in their silken robes, Roman soldiers in their scarlet cloaks, coarse people drawn by low curiosity, and the basest dregs of the city. These kept up a constant uproar of jeers and taunts and insults and violence against Jesus. And in the midst of it all what was he doing? Praying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do": the sublimest prayer in the Bible and in all the literature of the world.

A few of these taunts of that ungodly crowd were caught into the Gospels and have come down to us. Like everything that was said in derision against Jesus, they are so many crowns unwittingly placed upon his head. "He saved others," they jeeringly cried; "himself he cannot save." No grander eulogy could be pronounced even upon the Son of God. Unconsciously they placed upon his brow his brightest crown. He had "saved others," as many could have then testified, and as millions have testified since. But "himself he could not save," for he could have done this only at the cost of his devotion to his Father and his love to the world. No imagination could picture the consequences if on that eventful day Jesus had saved himself. It would have sent our lost human world reeling into outer darkness, unhinged the moral universe and cracked the great white throne of God.

The Inscription

On the top of the cross over the head of Jesus was a board whitened with chalk bearing in black letters the inscription, "This is the King of the Jews." Pilate wrote the inscription, doubtless as a deadly insult to the Jews, but he wrote better than he knew. It was written in three languages: in the official Latin, the current Greek, and the vernacular Aramaic. Every one present could understand one or other of these languages. The gospel is for all men of every race and tribe and nation, and it must be put into all tongues that all may hear and none may miss its good news. The Latin was representative of power in the ancient world, the Greek of culture, and the Aramaic of the common people. Christ is king over all: he is mighty for the strong, he has truth for the intellectual, and everywhere the common people hear him gladly.

The Meaning of It All

At length the end came, the last thread snapped, and with a great cry of mortal agony Jesus commended his spirit to the Father, his head fell forward, and he was still. Life had fled and he was dead. What was the meaning of this death? Was it only one more among the countless millions of human deaths that have swept the generations from the earth and left only dust to tell the tale? Theories have been framed by theologians in answering this question, but while each contains some element of truth, they are all together inadequate to compass its great mystery and are only broken lights of the full orbed sun of truth. This cross has eternal significance and reveals God and man, sin and salvation beyond all human comprehension. Only in the presence of this cross can we know man: how deep is his sin and how immeasurable is his worth. Only in the presence of this cross can we know God: how inexorable is his justice and how infinite is his love. Only in the presence of this cross can we know how deep is hell and how high is heaven. The love of God in Christ, the worth of man, the sinfulness of earth and the holiness of heaven, all these were gloriously manifested when on that green hill far away the dear Lord was crucified.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. How did it come that Roman soldiers crucified Jesus?
2. Why is the cross used in our churches and on their spires?
3. Give other unconscious eulogies pronounced upon Jesus.
4. What significance may we attach to the inscription on the cross?
5. What was the atonement which Jesus accomplished on the cross?

LXV

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS?

Some tremendous event happened back there nineteen hundred years ago on the first Easter morning that has ever since been surging through the world and lifting it to a higher level, even as a volcanic explosion and submarine upheaval five thousand miles away a few years ago sent giant waves racing across the Pacific and rolling in upon the shores of South America. Christendom itself is the consequence and mighty monument of the resurrection of Christ. However, the reality of the event does not rest wholly on this general fact, but also on many "infallible proofs."

The Morning of This Day

This epochal morning opened with the faithful women, who were last at the cross, first at the tomb. What were they doing there? They had brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. This loving act has immense significance as showing the state of mind of these women after the crucifixion. They believed that Jesus was dead and had no hope or thought of his resurrection. They found the tomb empty, and all the evangelists mention this fact, and it is an important and unbreakable link in the proof of this event. The women, after hearing the announcement, "He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said," fled affrighted, as men of stouter nerves would have done. They hastened to tell the disciples, but the startling news encountered persistent unbelief and even scoffs on the part of these men. "And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them." Who were these first unbelievers in the resurrection? Jewish priests and Roman officers? No, but "the apostles." Peter and James and John and all of the eleven believed the story of these women was some hallucination of their excited minds, "idle talk," "the wild talk of the sick in delirium," as the Greek word means. No doubt Peter was the loudest scoffer among them. All this shows they supposed that all was over. "I go afishing," presently said Peter. Back to the boats! They were utterly bewildered, scattered and crushed. Their dream was dead. They were in no condition of mind, then, to invent or imagine a resurrection, and any theory of fraud or hallucination or vision on the part of the disciples is a psychological impossibility. This is incidental and undesigned but strong confirmation of the reality of this event that meets us on the threshold of this day.

The whole day was one of tremendous excitement among the disciples in which they could hardly believe their own senses. This fact is reflected in the language of the narratives which use such words and phrases as "affrighted," "amazed," "terrified," "idle talk," and "great joy." This excitement may explain the fragmentary and disconnected and more or less confused accounts of these events, which were not calmly composed as a continuous and complete history, but were impressionistic memories of that wonderful morning.

Later Appearances

That afternoon Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and then in the evening to ten disciples in a room in Jerusalem, Thomas being absent. They also were affrighted "and supposed they had seen a spirit." Jesus greeted them with the assurance, "Peace be unto you." On this occasion it is noted in the narrative that "the doors were shut," and at another meeting in the same room a week later when Thomas was present and cured of his persistent doubt, it is again noted "the doors being shut." It is evident that there was something mysterious in the resurrection body of Jesus by which he could appear through closed doors and vanish at will. It may have been in a transitional state in passing from the earthly to the completely spiritualized body of the heavenly world.

In Galilee

Five appearances are mentioned on the first day and then the scene shifts to Galilee where two more are recorded. The first was at Lake Galilee when the disciples were out fishing in their boat and Jesus appeared and greeted them as he stood on the shore; and again when he appeared to "above five hundred brethren at once." "And when they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." Only an honest historian who was simply intent on telling the truth would have admitted the damaging fact that "some doubted." A partisan writer or pleader would have made it out that everybody worshiped and nobody doubted; the worship was absolutely unanimous! "But some doubted," calmly and boldly says Matthew, and he was there. We can trust a writer and a book that are so impartial and fearless in telling the truth.

There are ten of these recorded appearances and testimonies of eyewitnesses. They are numerous, competent and trustworthy men who could not have been deceived themselves and who sealed their testimony with their blood.

PAUL

A witness of special weight is Paul who after conversion went up to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and James the Lord's brother investigating this event on the ground. He says he went to "visit" Peter (Gal. 1:18), a word that means "to know by inquiry and personal examination," or "denotes visits paid to places of interest with a view to getting information about them on the spot." Paul was a lawyer and man of eminent ability and he cross-examined these witnesses and made sure of the reality of this event.

NOT DONE IN A CORNER

This thing was not done in a corner but in the light of the fullest publicity. God left no uncertainties hanging around this fact but placed it on a rock in the broad light of history. The disciples who at first were crushed by the death of Jesus were by his resurrection suddenly transformed into masterful men and who arose in their might and planted Christianity on this rock where it stands to this day; and they went everywhere preaching this fact and with it turned the world upside down. It is a vital fact in our Christian faith and we can join with the accent of conviction born of honest investigation and experienced belief in reciting the most ancient creed of the church: "I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What happened on the first day of the resurrection?
2. Why did the disciples disbelieve and scoff at the first reports of the resurrection?
3. What was peculiar about the resurrection body of Jesus?
4. What weighty evidence to the resurrection does Paul give?
5. Is belief in the resurrection of Jesus essential to Christian faith and to the continued existence of Christianity?

LXVI

WHAT IS THE GREAT COMMISSION OF JESUS?

HIS time on earth was growing short and the hour was come when the risen Christ must announce his final program. A mountain in Galilee was the appointed place for the momentous utterance. It was fitting that this program should be proclaimed from a mountain overlooking that same sea around which he had labored and near which on another summit he had preached the Mountain Sermon and sent its great words rolling through the centuries. And this final message matched the mountain, massive and mighty in proportion and power, with its summit bathed in the blue of heaven and its base rooted deep in the earth.

DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE MESSAGE

On this mountain gathered the company of the believers to hear what the Master would say. When a man announces his program for the world we want to know what his credentials are, by what authority he speaks. Many men have drawn up plans for reorganizing society and reforming the world, but their little schemes have come to naught because they had no depth of wisdom in constructing them and no power to put them in operation. Many philosophers have had dreams of social reconstruction and a golden age, but seldom have their dreams in the slightest degree affected the course of the world and were quickly mingled with its dust.

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and in earth," is the tremendous affirmation with which Jesus prefaces his program. He did not set out on his enterprise of world redemption without counting the cost and seeing that he had the means, and nothing in it shall fail which all power can accomplish. Heaven is on the side of Jesus Christ and wheels all its battalions into line under his banner. The power that framed the universe and forged all its burning suns and systems on the anvil of creation is at his disposal, the constellations are his silent and eternal allies.

This power flows down into and envelops the earth. The whole framework of nature is pliant and plastic and obedient to his touch. All the streams of human energy, population and commerce, wealth and war, enterprise and adventure, invention and discovery, science and literature and art, flow into channels that are guided and shaped and at least limited by his hand. The glorified Christ is not an indifferent or impotent spectator of the whirling panorama of this world, but he sets and moves its scenes, and with majestic dignity declares, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."

HUMAN COÖPERATION

Since all power can do all things, we might think that Jesus would with his own hand bring immediate redemption to the world. But this is not his method. "All authority hath been given unto me," "Go ye therefore," is the divine logic. Divine power must have human means through which to work. The currents of celestial omnipotence must have earthly wires along which to flow and flash. So all authority is lodged in the hands of the risen Christ, but it waits for our coöperation to shoot forth in the mightiest blows of power or to slip down in the softest accents of love. He stands back of us with his power, but we must go at his bidding.

On What Mission?

On what mission were these disciples sent? To overrun the world with armies and hack it into submission with the sword? To set up a world-empire of earthly power and splendor? No, but to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Standing on that Galilean mountain top, Jesus was looking out over all the world and speaking to the ages. He was no provincial Jew or parochial philosopher, but he stood in universal relations and was shaping all coming centuries. "Make disciples of all the nations," he calmly said, forseeing that all the world would be attracted by his truth and love and by the power of his personality and kingdom.

Christianity is no national or racial religion, it refuses to stay its steps at any mountain range or ocean shore or political boundary, but is a universal faith that like the atmosphere must flow over all mountains and peaks and shores and envelop the whole earth. With this command committed to us we should not think to shut the gospel up in our own lives and land, but give it universal wings and send it in undiminished freeness and fullness and richness around the world.

An Ever-present Christ

What is the connection between the divine power of Christ in heaven and the human disciples on earth? Is he so remote and separated from them that his power is unavailable and useless to them? He left no such missing link or break in the connection at this point. "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Jesus in his human person in the world was limited to one place and time. On this account it was expedient that he should go away into the spiritual world where he is released from such limitations and whence he can be with his disciples everywhere. It was therefore just as necessary that he should go out of the world in human form as that he should come into it. Sustained by his spiritual presence the apostles went forth preaching the gospel, martyrs stepped into the flames, and missionaries are yet declaring the gospel to all nations. We also are bound to him by the tie of loyalty, and he is ever with us to give us the victory that overcometh the world.

Such was the final program of Jesus Christ; and it corresponds with the course of history and fits this far off century in a way that shows he was indulging in no visionary dream, speaking no random guesses or fanatical hopes, but was legislating for the ages in these weighty words. How puny and futile seem the words of any other religious prophet or social dreamer that ever addressed the world? This grand utterance bears the impress of the divinity of our Lord and proclaims him the Master and Savior of mankind.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is the authority which has been given unto Christ?
2. With such authority in his hand, why does not he himself at once transform the world into his kingdom?
3. In what ways does Christ wait for our coöperation?
4. On what mission are we sent?
5. Is the great commission visibly being fulfilled?

LXVII

WHAT WAS THE ASCENSION OF JESUS?

WE have come to the closing scene, and it is worthy of its place as the conclusion and climax of this wonderful life. Had the story of the resurrection of Jesus been an invention or a myth, it would have been a hard matter to know how to bring his Life on earth to an end. Christ was risen and his work finished: what shall be done with him? He must not be permitted to die again, and he cannot remain. The critical point in a story is its conclusion. It must keep its interest up to the end and close at the highest point, or it breaks down and fails.

How Shall This Life End?

How shall this life, that opened with angel minstrelsy in the skies and was attended with many wonderful works and has just emerged from the tomb and been crowned with the wonder and glory of the resurrection, be brought to an appropriate and worthy conclusion? What novelist or poet or painter would dare attempt such a task? But give the pen to one of these humble unliterary followers of Jesus and he will write a conclusion that is a fitting culmination and climax to the whole story, and that viewed simply as a piece of literature and work of art is one of the most perfect and beautiful things in all the books of the world. How simple and natural it is, how free from all art and effort, affectation and self-consciousness, how true to reality! The man that wrote the story of the ascension of Jesus, we feel, did not invent it and never thought of inventing anything. Nobody imagined it, it was fact, the disciples simply related what they saw, and here it is:

"And he led them out until they were over against Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God. Amen."

Who can gild that gold, or paint that lily, or throw a perfume on that flower of literature? It is art surpassing art, simply because the writer had no other purpose than to tell what happened on that day at Bethany when the risen Lord made his farewell appearance to his disciples and was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

Out Over against Bethany

"He led them out until they were over against Bethany." We can see the little company emerging from the eastern gate of Jerusalem, perhaps on a bright May morning when, instead of the darkness of the crucifixion, all nature was clad in fresh colors and seemed to sing in gladness. They descend into the valley of the Kedron, wend their way up over Mount Olivet and down its eastern slope as far as to Bethany, all the while talking earnestly concerning the kingdom and the disciples possibly unconscious of what was impending.

Every step of the way was crowded with sacred memories and associations. In ascending Olivet they passed Gethsemane, where Jesus fought the real battle of the cross. At the summit they stood on the spot where he first saw Jerusalem in his triumphal entry and wept over the city. And Bethany was dear to him by many ties. There was the house of Mary and Martha where so often he had dwelt and rested. Possibly more than any other spot during his ministry it was home to him. No wonder his feet now found their way to this place when he was about to take his farewell look at earth. We all want to go home to die. Where our eyes first saw the light of day, there let the final rush of darkness come. Jesus was human to the last.

Why Only to Bethany?

Why did Jesus lead his disciples only as far as Bethany?

Why did he not lead them all the way and remain with his followers through all the generations and centuries, in every land working miracles and speaking as never man spoke, until the kingdoms of this world were his? Ought he not above all others to stay until the end? Yet he was the first to go. He led them out as far as to Bethany and there he left them. How can we explain this? Jesus himself explained it. "It is expedient for you," he said, "that I go away." It was expedient for them—not for him. It was no cowardly desertion of his post of duty that took him out of the world. But it was expedient for his disciples and for his cause and kingdom in the world that he should go: he could lead them better from his throne in heaven than he could on earth; his Spirit would come and universally administer his kingdom in the world. The place for the captain of a steamship is up on the bridge, not down at the wheel or in the engine room. Lincoln could do vastly more for his generals and soldiers in Washington than he could have done for them on the field. The ascension of Jesus was the crowning act of his work, for it put him in the right place and enthroned him over all the world.

He Was Parted from Them

"He was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven." He came under the attraction of a higher gravitation and instead of being bound to this little globule of earth he rose and vanished into the unseen spiritual world. What possibilities this may involve or hint for our glorified bodies we do not know and need not speculate. "And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." They wanted to stay. There they stood gazing up into the sky at the point where Jesus had disappeared as though they expected him presently to reappear. But while they looked, two white-appareled angels stood by them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here looking into heaven? This same Jesus, who was received into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."

And so we are living between two visits of Jesus Christ to this world. He has come and gone and will come again. But in the meantime we are not to stand gazing into heaven. From our worship we must ever return to our work. This worship of the risen Christ has now widened down through the centuries and its works are blessing mankind. The torch of this light has been passed into our hands and we are to carry it around the world.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why was it expedient for the risen Christ to leave the world?
2. What makes the account of the ascension so charming?
3. Why did Jesus ascend at Bethany?
4. Why did not Jesus go all the way with his disciples?
5. Where did Jesus go at his ascension?

LXVIII

WHAT HAPPENED AT PENTECOST?

CHRISTIANITY has now come to its critical hour. Its Christ has done his earthly work and disappeared from the human scene. The critical question now is, How will his cause and kingdom get along without him? Will the hands of his human disciples be strong and wise enough to hold the fabric of the new kingdom together and keep it on its foundation, or will the story of the life of Jesus now prove to be only "a sweet Galilean vision" and quickly fade and leave no trace that can be discovered under the dust of the centuries? This question is answered in the Book of Acts and the remaining books of the New Testament. It is a stirring story. It starts out splendidly at Pentecost with marvelous success and then encounters opposition and falls on dark times, but it holds on its way to this day.

Propitious Conditions

Pentecost was the first recorded service of worship held by the Christian church. All conditions were propitious. The harvest feast drew throngs to Jerusalem, and the apostles launched their propaganda on this wave. The disciples were all present. Not one member of the church was missing to leave a gap in the little audience, and the circuit was continuous and complete, ready for the flash of power from above. There is power in compactness, and every vacant seat in the church is a break and leakage in the current of spiritual energy. The disciples were not only in one place, but were also there with one accord, blended into unity of mind and heart. There were no factions, strifes and strained relations among these church members.

What was the secret of this mother church of all Christendom, the cradle in which we were all nursed, and is to this day the model church of the world? It was not numbers, for it had only a hundred and twenty members, a number hardly worth counting in our large churches. It had no scarlet cushioned pews and stained glass windows, in fact it had no church building at all. It had no money in its treasury and did not even have a treasurer. It had no choir and pipe organ, and no settled or salaried pastor. It had no elders, deacons, trustees; no Sunday school or missionary society, and no formal or informal organization whatever. There was almost nothing there that we would call a church to-day, yet never has there been such a church since.

What did it have? It had unanimity. It had one hundred and twenty souls fused into one great faith and passion. It was simply an open channel free from human clogs through which the Spirit of God could flow in obstructed fullness, and such a church will ever be flooded and drenched with Pentecostal power.

Divine Power

The human conditions were ready and now the divine manifestation came; the Spirit found the continuous circuit and flashed forth in power. This coming of the Spirit wa mediated in and through physical signs and symbols, fo God ever uses material crutches to support our spiritual infirmities. Wind and fire were these symbols, and what coul be more fitting and forcible? The air ordinarily lies aroun us so invisible and still and imperceptible, yet when stirre under the play of the sun's heat wakes its slumbering powe and begins to blow in breezes and to gather into storm and tornado that levels forests and lashes the sea. So may the Holy Spirit lie around us unfelt and we may think the great Spirit of the universe is dead, but when we are in the right condition he gathers his energies together and sweeps down upon us in power in which our souls are tossed as leaves in a storm. So also fire as it sifts down upon us in the soft sunshine does not seem to have much energy, but it makes the whole earth bud and bloom, and as it is condensed into the lightning bolt or in a glowing furnace it has enormous explosive and motive power. The truths of Scripture are condensed spirit as coal and wood are condensed sunshine. When these are kindled by the Holy Spirit they develop their hidden energy. Our sins burn us. Spiritual things that seemed so shadowy and evanescent become intensely real and we see them solid. It is as though a new world suddenly opened and we saw God!

A Great Sermon and Its Results

On this occasion, Peter, the fisherman-preacher, himself set on fire and fused into a passion of faith and energy by the Holy Spirit, preached a great sermon of which the burning point was, "Repent! Change your mind, get a new point of view, catch a new vision that will uplift and transform your life!" This was the first word in the preaching of John the Baptist and also of Jesus himself, so that the gospel has not changed its message in passing from John to Jesus and from Jesus to Peter and the apostles and this challenging word still holds its place as a sparkling diamond on the outstretched forefinger of the gospel. Rushing wind and burning fire did their proper work. The whole audience was set on fire of the Spirit and a wonderful scene followed. Three thousand souls were converted and the little church became a multitude in a day. The ratio of increase was twenty-five converts to one church member, but now we have just about reversed this ratio and show one convert for twenty-five members. If the church to-day were only baptized and saturated with the Spirit as was this Pentecostal church, how quickly would Christ reign!

This is what happened on Pentecost, a date and event of which the Christian world is now celebrating its nineteen hundredth anniversary. It was an auspicious opening of the campaign of Christianity as it set out on its world adventure, a decisive demonstration that its power did not depend on the human presence of Jesus but could move on in wider circles and with more plenteous and overwhelming power after he had left the world to administer his kingdom from his heavenly throne. The human conditions that assured this Pentecostal plentitude of spiritual power can be fulfilled by us, if we are only willing, and so doing our day of Pentecost will surely come and God will pour upon us a blessing which there will not be room to receive.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What was Pentecost?
2. What were promising conditions in the church on this day?
3. What sermon did Peter preach on this occasion?
4. What was the outpouring of the Spirit?
5. Can we have a Pentecostal church and blessing?

LXIX

HOW DID CHRISTIANITY GET OUT INTO THE GENTILE WORLD?

Pentecost proved that Christ was still the power of God unto salvation in Jerusalem. Christianity was not shorn of its power by his departure, but was all the more surely established in its original seat and center. But now it was confronted with another momentous question. What was to be its relation to the Gentile world? Was it only a form of Judaism, confined to the Jewish race, or was it a world religion equally open to all men? The apostles and leaders of the church in Jerusalem at first thought Christianity was only for the Jews, and only gradually did they become aware of the larger question. And so it was by no plan and purpose of these leaders that Christianity did take the first steps out into the Gentile world but rather it stumbled out unwittingly and then soon became involved in the great problem and controversy that resulted from these initial and largely unintentional steps.

Philip in Samaria

The first of these steps was that of Philip the evangelist who went down to Samaria and there preached the gospel with surprising success. Samaria, however, was not strictly Gentile or pagan ground, for the Jews and Samaritans were kindred peoples and had the same general religion, and were different denominations, so to speak, of the same ancestral faith. Samaria might be regarded at Jerusalem as, at the farthest, home missionary ground. Still it was one step outside Jerusalem and opened the way for others. It took some stretch of charity and faith to preach the gospel there, for Jew and Samaritan were all the more deeply and bitterly divided because they were of the same general faith and hated each other with almost perfect hatred. Yet Philip boldly adventured on this hostile ground and preached the gospel so effectually that "there was much joy in that city." While the authorities at Jerusalem did not begin this movement, yet when they heard of its success they sent Peter and John to look into it and report on its regularity; for while ecclesiastical authorities may not start new movements they generally want to get their hands on them and control them after they are started. The work these apostles saw in Samaria was so evidently genuine that they prayed for the converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit and thus the work was sealed as of divine origin and authority. Philip was quickly caught up of the Spirit out of Samaria and dropped down at Gaza where he fell in with and converted and baptized an Ethiopian officer and thus did receive into the Christian church a pagan man. The great movement is now getting on its feet, but in this haphazard way.

PETER AND CORNELIUS

Next we find Peter down in the coast country on a kind of roving commission or evangelistic tour on his own account, and presently he fell in with Cornelius, the Roman officer, stationed at Capernaum. The two men were brought together by preparatory visions and divine guidance of a remarkable kind. Peter at first resisted going to the Gentile, for this in itself violated and shocked all his ancestral and racial religion and pride, but at length he yielded to the divine bidding and stood before the Roman soldier assembled with his family and friends. Peter began his address to them by explaining that "ye yourselves know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean." Presently the astonished Peter was able to declare, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him," and further said, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should b baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? He then commanded that they be baptized and thereby received these Gentiles into the Christian church. Peter ha already broken out of this Jewish shell and is released from its dead cerements and has entered a new world. When h stepped over the threshold into that pagan house and baptized that Roman soldier he effected a crossing more revolutionary and momentous than was Cæsar's crossing th Rubicon.

The Gospel at Antioch

Next in the same independent and sporadic way the gospel broke out at Antioch in Syria, far to the north of Jerusalem. This Greek city was a flourishing center of commerce and wealth and pagan worship. Some Christian converts from Cyprus and Cyrene came to it and began preaching the gospel "unto the Greeks." This was the first time the gospel was preached openly to pagans, and "the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." Again Jerusalem had nothing to do with starting the movement, but when the church leaders in that center of ecclesiastical authority heard of it, they again thought that they should look into and get their hands on it. They were fortunate in the choice of the delegate they sent on this important errand, for Barnabas had good in him and therefore could see good in others: "who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all." A strong church grew up in this corrupt pagan city and became famous, first, as the place "where the disciples were called Christians first," and second as the first church that sent out foreign missionaries into the Gentile world.

Thus we find Christianity starting up at various widely separated points in the Gentile world, not in accordance with a prepared program for an intentional invasion of Gentile territory, but rather in an accidental and sporadic way under the spontaneous enterprise of individual believers. Even those that took these steps, especially Peter, did not mean to inaugurate the great movement but had to be forced or led into it in an accidental way. Peter violently opposed it at first as did other apostles and leaders when the issue was definitely raised. But the spirit of Christianity as a world religion was already working unconsciously in its followers and presently the great storm broke and the new faith was released from its old shell in an agony of travail. The story of this victory is the great battle of the New Testament.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What was the real relation of Christianity to Judaism?
2. What were the views of the early Jewish Christians on this point?
3. Why was Samaria a difficult place to start a Christian mission?
4. How did the gospel get started at Antioch?
5. How did the church authorities at Jerusalem regard these first Gentile missions?

LXX

HOW DID SAUL THE PERSECUTOR BECOME PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES?

Epochal events are crowding fast upon us as we are tracing the process by which Christianity cut loose from Judaism and ventured out into the Gentile world. At this point we must introduce the chief figure in this great crisis and see how Saul the persecutor of Christianity became Paul the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

The Individuality of Paul

Paul was a Jew by birth and was a Hebrew university graduate and a lawyer and influential rabbi in Jerusalem and also a freeborn Roman citizen. Born in Tarsus in Asia

Minor, he was bred in Greek culture and could quote Gree literature. Three civilizations, Hebrew, Greek and Roman thus met and mingled in his blood. He was a man of acut and powerful intellect, of logic all compact, yet of poeti and fiery temperament, a keen thinker and forceful write who could sound the depths of philosophy or let loose hi thoughts on the wings of imagination, a cosmopolita traveler, and an impassioned orator who could put the spell of his eloquent speech on vast audiences. Paul was city-bred and his ears were full of the tumult of the market and the uproar of crowds and mobs. He was intensely active and ardent, militant in spirit, always ready for a fight and scenting the battle from afar. Many sided, variously gifted, unspotted in character, deeply religious, terribly conscientious, tremendously in earnest in his convictions and volcanic in his emotions, by turns cool and calm or hot and passionate, at one time proudly boastful and at another in the depths of self-humiliation, adventurous and masterful as a pioneer preacher and missionary, absolutely devoted to his Lord and brave unto death, he was one of the great men of his age and of all the ages and had helped to shape all the Christian centuries.

SAUL THE PERSECUTOR

At first Saul was a bitter enemy of Christ and his gospel. An intensely orthodox Jew in birth and blood and training and zeal, he regarded Christ as the greatest heretic and most dangerous man in the world, and his soul blazed with hatred toward his disciples and he breathed out fire and slaughter against them. He stood holding the clothes of those that stoned Stephen the martyr, and next we find him out on the way to Damascus to carry death far beyond Jerusalem. It took him several days to journey on horse from Jerusalem 140 miles northward to Damascus. This must have been a time of cooling down and calm consideration in his fiery spirit. Possibly the expiring cry of Stephen strangely awoke and rang through his soul. He unexpectedly found himself troubled over his work. He was surprised to find his convictions were not so unanimous and solid as he had supposed. Cracks began to cleave his conscience into doubts. He felt himself on the eve of an impending crisis; already conscience was ripe for revolt and reversal.

PAUL CONVERTED

Upon this thoughtful troubled man conversion fell. The Holy Spirit found him trembling upon the point of doubt and bore down upon him at this critical psychological moment. As in all conversions, human and divine elements were interblended and worked together. A blinding blaze of light burnt through the sky and Paul was unhorsed. He heard a voice and saw a figure and instantly he recognized the Lord and turned around from enmity to faith and adoration. This vision was so vividly and deeply burnt into his mind that he could never forget any detail of it and three times it is related in the Acts, twice by himself. He viewed his own vision of Christ as belonging in the same class with the appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples. He was then bidden to arise and was given his life commission as a witness to "the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee." He was led into Damascus where he was taken in charge by Christian brethren and further instructed in the Christian way. Thus the most powerful opponent of Christianity was turned squarely around in his course and became the greatest preacher and missionary of and weightiest witness to the faith he once sought to destroy.

INTRODUCED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Straightway Paul turned his vision into verity, his faith into fact and force that began to cut its way through his own day and through the centuries. He lingered in and near Damascus for the space of three years, apparently deepening and ripening his new convictions, and then he went up to Jerusalem and consulted with the apostles and other brethren. He especially "visited" or "cross-examined" Peter and James, the brother of the Lord, concerning the historic facts of the gospel and especially the resurrection of Christ. He then went back to Tarsus and was there about ten years, apparently "silent years" in which he was further preparing himself for his work.

When Barnabas came to Antioch, where the gospel was first preached openly to Gentiles, and began to work in that promising field and church, he presently went around to Tarsus to find Paul and brought him to Antioch where he began his public ministry. The Spirit now moved this first Gentile church to select men to send out as foreign missionaries into further Gentile territory, and the choice fell upon Paul and Barnabas, the two ablest men in that church. One would have thought that such a choice and policy would have been opposed on the ground that they were the very men that were needed at home in the new work they had just started. But the church has always been led to select its ablest men and choicest spirits for missionary work, and so they set sail westward, the direction in which the star of spiritual empire has generally traveled. They crossed over to Cyprus and then up into the mountain villages of Galatia in Asia Minor, where they visited four towns and left in each a little group of believers that became a Christian church. Paul is now in his element, the warrior has put on his armor and is in the midst of the battle, his spirit is on fire, and he has begun that career that carried the gospel out through a wide circuit in the Roman world and ended at Rome itself.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Give an account of the life of Paul up to his conversion?
2. What led up to and prepared him for his conversion?
3. What did Paul do between his conversion and his return to Tarsus?
4. How important was the church in Antioch?
5. Are there any conversions to-day comparable to that of Paul?

LXXI

WHAT VITAL ISSUES WERE SETTLED AT THE TWO COUNCILS IN JERUSALEM?

THE morning after Pentecost we find "Peter and John going up into the temple at the hour of prayer," being quite unaware that a revolution had taken place by which Judaism was superseded and Christianity had come as its fulfillment. All the early disciples thought that Christianity was only an advanced form of Judaism and were going on with the old worship. We have seen how at various points this theory was being shaken and now we are to see how the change rocked Christianity to its foundations. Were the Gentiles to be admitted on equal terms with the Jews into the Christian church? This was the greatest issue and epochal decision that could confront the church, and history trembled in the balance the day the apostles and brethren met in a general council to decide it.

THE FIRST COUNCIL: SHALL GENTILES BE ADMITTED TO THE CHURCH?

The news of what Peter had done down at Cæsarea in going in to Cornelius and baptizing him was soon a matter of talk up in Jerusalem. The report was abroad that "the Gentiles had received the word of God," and this, instead of being good news, was in itself a shock and a scandal to the Jewish Christians. A council was called and Peter, taking with him six brethren as witnesses, went up to Jerusalem to attend it. Before the council he told the story of his experience with Cornelius in graphic terms, showing how his own inveterate prejudices had been overmastered and he had been led of the Spirit to baptize the pagans. The effect of the narrative was decisive. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." They also could not resist the logic of events and withstand the manifest grace of God. Their noisy clamor against Peter's irregularity and scandal in associating with and receiving Gentiles quieted down, they held their peace, often a very hard thing to do, grew attentive and receptive, and ended with glorifying God for his universal grace.

It was a great day in the Christian church when this victory was won. Had these Jewish Christians succeeded in fastening their view upon Christianity and binding it with their racial and religious restrictions, they would have strangled it in its cradle; they would have doomed it to remain a Jewish sect and it never would have reached us. This victory released it from its Jewish shell in which it had been hatched and from the Judean crag to which it was tethered and let it spread its wings for a world-wide flight. We need to appreciate and glory in this universal breadth of the gospel and proclaim it far and wide, for it is this victory that gave it to us and to all the peoples of the world.

THE SECOND COUNCIL: MUST GENTILES BE BAPTIZED?

Old issues once settled die hard and have a way of coming to life in another form, and it was so with this issue. No sooner had Paul and Barnabas arrived in Antioch from their missionary journey than they were confronted with a great crisis. "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This was akin to but not just the same question that had been settled at the first council in Jerusalem. There the question was, Shall Gentile converts be admitted to the church? Here the question was, Shall they be admitted without being circumcised? Defeated on the first point, these Judaizers are bringing up practically the same issue in another form.

We must try to put ourselves in the place of these Jewish Christians and see the situation from their point of view. It seemed to them that the admission of the Gentiles into the church without circumcision was destructive of the whole system of Moses that had been consecrated by more than a thousand years of glorious history. This was a terrible wrench and shock to their orthodox consciences, and we may well appreciate and sympathize with their sore experience, especially when we consider how hard it is for us to change even minor points in our religious creed and worship. Yet however conscientious they were, they were not blameless in their blindness, and Paul calls them "false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, that they might bring us again into bondage."

A second council now met at Jerusalem and the different views were presented. Peter was the first speaker who repeated his experience, and then a great silence fell on the council as Paul and Barnabas rose to speak. The exploits of these missionaries had made them illustrious and they had come back as generals from a victorious campaign. They recited the story of their work and rehearsed the wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles. Then James, the brother of Jesus and head of the church in Jerusalem, spoke. He was a sympathizer with, if not a supporter of, the Judaizing party and might have been expected to oppose Peter and Paul. But he took strong ground in favor of the Gentiles and quoted the prophets to prove his position. The council was thus brought into unexpected agreement and consolidated the church in the principle and policy of universal salvation with freedom from the ceremonial law of Moses. Christianity was again saved from Jewish sectarianism and provincialism and from schism and was finally loosed from its Jewish swaddling clothes and started out unimpeded on its world-wide march and conquest.

There are three books in the New Testament that have this point of the universality of the Gospel specially in view. First, the Gospel according to Matthew that is showing all the way through that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and is its promised Messiah. Second, Paul's letter to the Galatians which is a trumpet blast against the Judaizers who followed his steps through Galatia and tried to fasten circumcision on his converts. And third, the Epistle to the Hebrews which contends that however glorious was the old system of Moses, the new system of Christ is much more glorious. So we have a universal gospel to-day, unfettered by the cerements of Judaism, and open to all the world as the glorious liberty of Christ in the kingdom of God.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why did Peter and John after Pentecost go up into the temple to pray?
2. What called the first council in Jerusalem?
3. How was the issue at the council settled?
4. What was the issue at the second council?
5. Of what interest are these councils to us?

LXXII

WHAT WERE PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS?

Paul was the powerful personality and masterful pioneer who first cut a wide swath into the pagan world in his famous three missionary journeys.

His First Missionary Journey

We have already glanced at Paul's first missionary journey, but sketch it more fully to fill out the picture. Paul and Barnabas sailed from Antioch westward and passed through the island of Cyprus, gaining converts, including the Roman governor, and then crossed over to Asia Minor and proceeded to preach at four mountain towns, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, at each place beginning in the synagogue and then, being driven out, preaching to the Gentiles. A handful of converts was gained at each place and these became Christian churches on the outposts of heathenism. Paul and Barnabas then retraced their steps through these towns encouraging the believers and returned to Antioch, their home base. At this time and place, Paul, having learned of the Judaizers who had tracked him through Galatia telling his converts that unless they were circumcised they could not be saved, wrote his first letter, the Epistle to the Galatians, which is a trumpet blast against this attempt to entangle his converts in the bondage of Judaism.

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Following the second council at Jerusalem which Paul attended and at which was finally settled the relation of Christianity to the Gentiles, Paul left Antioch on his second missionary journey. He struck up through Asia Minor, visiting his Galatian churches, and passed to Troas on the shore of the narrow Ægean sea separating Asia from Europe. Here he heard in a vision the voice of a man calling, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Instantly obeying the heavenly vision, as his habit was, the little party, now consisting of Saul, Silas, Timothy and Luke, passed over to Neapolis on the European shore. In going over this narrow strip of water these travelers crossed a more revolutionary and momentous Rubicon than Cæsar ever dared, and this voyage of a few hours marks one of the greatest crossings of history.

Paul and his companions now traveled through several Macedonian towns, gathering converts at each place and leaving the nucleus of a Christian church, but also meeting with persecution at each forward step. His first convert in Europe at Philippi was Lydia, a seller of purple, so that the man of Macedonia turned out to be a woman. Paul passed on to Athens, where he stopped to preach only one sermon, one of his greatest, in that university center of the world and not without some notable results, and then went fifty miles westward to Corinth, a wealthy and wicked Greek center of commerce and art. Here he labored a year and a half and founded a church that became notable in the early history of Christianity. At this point he wrote his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, encouraging these converts of his in that church, and presently followed it up with the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. He now returned by way of Jerusalem back to Antioch, the home base.

THIRD JOURNEY

In his third missionary journey Paul went straight from Antioch to Ephesus, an important Greek city on the coast of the Ægean Sea, and there he labored for three years. Ephesus was the seat of the great temple and worship of Diana, and in time Paul's preaching began to undermine the sale of the images of the goddess and then the silversmiths' union raised a cry and a mob against the preacher and he was driven out. At this point Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians to correct some evils that had arisen in that church, and presently followed it up with the Second Epistle to the same church. Passing on from Ephesus Paul went around through Macedonia to Corinth, where he remained three months, and at this point he wrote his great Epistle to the Romans, Rome being a city and world magnet that was already pulling on his steps and heart to visit it. From Corinth Paul went back to Jerusalem, stopping at Ephesus to visit the church and going on up to Jerusalem against the protests of his friends, as he knew that trouble awaited him there. Here Paul's three journeys ended, but the end was not yet.

PAUL IN ROME

At Jerusalem Paul was soon attacked by a Jewish mob in the temple area and was arrested by the Roman captain who sent him down to Cæsarea for trial before the Roman proconsul. Here he was detained two years and appeared first before Felix and then before his successor Festus. Paul, however, now appealed his case to Rome as a Roman citizen, and this took him to that city. On the sea voyage, one of the most famous sea stories in the literature of the sea, the ship ran into a great storm and presently Paul stood on the deck as the captain of the ship and got all its people ashore when it was wrecked on the island of Malta. After wintering at that place, he proceeded to Rome and at last entered the Eternal City, whither all faces and steps were then turned as the center of the world. Paul lived in Rome in his own hired house for two years, but as a prisoner with a Roman soldier chained to his wrist, preaching and writing letters. During this time he wrote the Epistles to the Philippians, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and the golden little letter to Philemon. Luke abruptly closes his account of the life of Paul in the Acts at this point, leaving Paul in prison.

According to tradition Paul was released for a season, during which he wrote the Epistles to Titus and First Timothy, and was then returned to Rome for his final imprisonment. During this period he wrote his last letter, the Second Epistle to Timothy, and then his hand was stilled by execution.

Thus Paul in his missionary journeys swung around a wide circle in the Roman Empire and carried the gospel up to the city and even the palace of the mighty Cæsar himself. Yet how small a man was that Cæsar compared with this Christian apostle! Paul cut the road and laid the foundation for Christianity out in the Gentile world, and with him passed the greatest man in the New Testament and the greatest leader since Moses. And hardly of any other human being is it so grandly true that "he being dead yet speaketh."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. How did Paul come to go on his first missionary journey?
2. How did the first foreign mission come to set out from a Gentile city and church?
3. Do any visions ever call us to service?
4. What did Paul's three missionary journeys accomplish?
5. What are foreign missions doing to-day?

LXXIII

WHAT IS THE PORTRAIT OF PAUL DRAWN IN HIS EPISTLES?

As a final view of Paul let us review his letters, for as a whole they form his autobiography and reflect the many-sided, vari-colored aspects of his life. They are full of all the storm and stress of his picturesque career. Hebrew religion and Greek thought and Roman life are interwoven throughout their entire fabric. They are Paul as painted by himself, and no other life in the Roman Empire of his day stands out in such intimate and lifelike portraiture and realistic colors.

PROGRESSION OF IDEAS

There is plainly in them a progression of ideas and spirit. In general this progress is from the outer to the inner, from the objective and ceremonial to the subjective and spiritual, from controversy to conciliation, from the external apocalyptic kingdom in the world to the inner reign of God in the heart, from theology to religion, from argument with others to meditation in himself, from factionalism to fellowship, from tumult to calm, from storm to serenity, and from passion to peace.

The letters begin with the battle cry and trumpet blast of Galatians and close with the quiet admonitions and affectionate endearments of II Timothy. At first Paul is the aggressive emancipator as he stands up for his Gentile converts and dares to declare, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek"; then he is the conciliator between the Jew and the Greek as he harmonizes parties and factions in his churches; then in Romans, midway in his apostolic career, he is the systematizer of doctrinal theology; in Ephesians he is a spiritualizer as he penetrates and fills doctrine and church life with the vital breath of the spirit; in

Colossians he is a meditative and mystic philosopher as he deeply reflects upon the cosmic Christ as the immanent principle of the universe by whom all things consist and reaches conclusions that are profoundly akin to modern philosophical idealistic views of the universe; as a mystic he loses himself in the life that is hid with Christ in God; he is a philanthropist in Philemon in which he writes only a few words that yet put dynamite under the institution of slavery and helped to blow it out of the world; finally he is "Paul the aged" writing farewell words with a fettered and weary hand in which he declares that he is ready to be offered and is calmly waiting for the sure stroke of a Roman sword. Thus the stream, which at first leaped forth as a raging mountain torrent and then ran a swift course, at length slowed down into a calm current and finally broadened out and silently slipped into and mingled with the immeasurable sea.

A Strange Omission

There is one strange and startling omission in these letters: the life and teaching of Jesus. Not an utterance or parable or miracle or a deed of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, save the glorious exception of his resurrection, appears in the Epistles of Paul. He must have had some knowledge of these things that are so foundational and precious to us, but he disregarded them as not pertaining to his purpose. The human Jesus becomes invisible in the light of the glorified Christ, as a candle is lost in the splendor of the sun. It was the cross that absorbed the soul of Paul, and the risen Christ filled the whole field of his vision. Hardly ever is Christ quoted, but his person is adored; his sayings are scarcely mentioned, but Christ himself is all in all.

All Theological Parties Find Support in Paul

It is because he is so many-sided that men of all theological parties and emotional temperaments find support in Paul. Roman Catholic and Protestant, Calvinist and Arminian, conservative and liberal, theologian and mystic, philosopher and poet, all lay claim to Paul and find in his letters apt texts to support their claims. Preacher and pioneer, pastor and missionary, orator and man of letters, logical thinker and mystical dreamer, a poet who could write a lovely lyric that is hardly surpassed in all literature and yet a man of practical action and daring adventure who could write down a catalogue of appalling hardships, he poured his complex and rich nature and varied life into his letters so that they are among the most precious treasures of the New Testament and are the most valuable and vital letters in the literature of the world.

A GREAT UNIFIER OF CHRISTENDOM

Paul is thus a great center of unity for Christendom. At first he was mainly concerned with the externals of religion, ceremony and freedom, although he was concerned in these because they involved the spirituality and liberty of the gospel and kingdom of God in the world. But as he advanced, these externals seemed to drop more and more out of his view and he concentrated his vision on the fundamentals of Christian life and love. He was a masterly leader in establishing the liberty of the gospel from Jewish bondage, but he was presently more concerned with abolishing all distinctions of Jew and Gentile, male and female, and maintaining the equality of all in the kingdom. We may well believe that to-day he would take small interest in our denominational differences and divisions and would stand for the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

We may conclude our review of Paul's Epistles with an evaluation of them by Professor Francis G. Peabody in his recent volume on *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World:* "In short, the letters of Paul are the confessions of a great soul and the counsels of a great mind, revealing with the intimacy of passionate affection the hopes and fears, the ideas and the ideals, which passing events conspired to suggest. Liberty, unity, spirituality, the bearing of each other's burdens, the supreme law of sacrificial love—these essential graces of the Christian life, traced in a masterly fashion to the abiding influence of the grace of Jesus Christ, give the letters of Paul their permanent place as guides of religious experience, and chapters of spiritual autobiography in the history of literature."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Give the names of Paul's thirteen letters and the order in which they were written?
2. What are some special features of his letters?
3. In what sense were they inspired?
4. Were these all the letters he wrote and do we know of any others?
5. What is the value of these letters to us to-day?

LXXIV

HOW DID CHURCH OFFICES ARISE?

ANY system of truth that is to be propagated must have organization and officers. Truth cannot go naked through the world but must have a body and brain, hands and feet. And so the Christian church inevitably acquired organization and officers, and an important question is what these officers were and how they arose.

THE APOSTLES

Jesus himself called twelve disciples to be under his personal training and they continued after his departure as apostles, meaning those who were sent on a mission. These men had entire charge of the administration of the church and appointed subordinate officers as they were needed. They were limited to those who were "a witness with us of his resurrection," and so the office was temporary. This was the first and highest office in the church, but it passed away with the original apostles.

Deacons

The first need of further organization arose after Pentecost in connection with the administration of the benevolent funds raised for the poor of the church. A complaint arose about the fairness of the distribution, and the twelve overburdened with their proper work called for help and said, "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the spirit of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." This was done and thus the office of deacon was established. It grew out of a present and pressing practical need and was the product of the hour. No Scripture or other authority or precedent was adduced in support of it, but it stood on its own ground of practical use and common sense, and this may be taken as a precedent of all other offices that in due time followed as they were needed. The deacons were elected by the church so that it was a democratic office.

Elders and Bishops

We next find Paul and Barnabas appointing "elders in every church" they had founded in Galatia on the first missionary journey, and on their return when the question was raised by the Judaizers "the apostles and elders were gathered together to consider this matter." Paul met with the elders of the church of Ephesus and presently there were elders in all these early churches. While Paul and Barnabas "appointed" elders in Galatia, yet this also was a democratic office representing the people and as the apostolate ceased to exist they were chosen by the people.

In his first Epistle to Timothy (3:1-7) Paul gives extended directions as to the "office of a bishop," but no indications as to what are the duties of the office, his directions relating almost exclusively to moral character. Later in the same letter (5:17-20), he gives similar directions as to elders, emphasizing their moral character but with little reference to their duties other than "the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and teaching." It is generally held by scholars that "bishops" and "elders" relate to the same office, perhaps with some reference to a distinction in the administration of its duties. It is true that this has long been a debated question and is yet, but there is now less disagreement than formerly and it is generally held by Anglican scholars that there is no vital distinction between the two offices. The important fact is that this office, like that of the deacon, arose out of practical need and no Scripture authority or precedent was quoted in its support.

In I Corinthians 12:28 Paul gives a list of church offices as follows: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." (See also Eph. 4:11). This is a general enumeration of the various functions performed by members of the church without implying that these are so many different offices. Paul is illustrating how the one body of Christ has many members, each with its own use, but he subordinates all these offices to the spirit of love. "But desire earnestly the best gifts. And moreover a more excellent way show I unto you."

In time other offices arose in the Christian church. Bishops did become differentiated from elders and became a superior office, such office arising out of the need of more general supervision than that of the elder or pastor of an individual congregation. In a similar way arose archbishops and the end of this process was the entire Roman hierarchy culminating in the Pope. We are carrying on the same process still, and every denomination has offices it has created to meet its special needs: Methodists have their bishops and even Presbyterians have synodical superintendents closely corresponding with bishops and a Moderator of the General Assembly that may be regarded as an archbishop if not as a pope. All these modern offices arise out of some special need and have upon them the stamp of practical validity.

View of an Anglican Scholar

Canon B. H. Streeter, an Anglican scholar of eminence, in a recent volume on *The Primitive Church: Studied with Special Reference to the Origins of the Christian Ministry,* sets aside the common assumption "that in the first century there existed a single type of Church Order," and maintains that in the New Testament itself there is an evolution in Church Order and that at the end of the first century there were different systems of Church government in different provinces of the Roman Empire—prototypes respectively of the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Independent systems. "Everywhere," he says, "there was readiness to experiment, and, where circumstances seemed to demand it, to change." He suggests that "it may be that the line of advance for the Church today is not to imitate the forms, but recapture the spirit of the Primitive Church." The conclusion of the whole matter is that there is no inspired and authoritative form of church polity, but we are to follow the precedent of the church in all ages in adapting and creating such offices in the church as practical needs require. "New occasions teach new duties."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What need is there of church offices?
2. What is the office of deacon in our churches to-day?
3. What churches now have elders and how does this office differ from that of deacons?
4. What character was required of elders in the New Testament?
5. What offices growing out of practical need have arisen in our churches to-day?

LXXV

WHAT PAGAN ELEMENTS DID THE NEW TESTAMENT ASSIMILATE?

As Christianity passed out into the pagan world it necessarily began the process of adapting itself to and assimilating elements from the soil and climate into which it moved, just as plants when transplanted to another continent are modified by the new environment.

The Greek Language

The New Testament, being written in Greek, underwent a sea change in the process. It derived from the Greek something more and much more than the mere words in which it was expressed. The words of any language not only convey their primary significations but also carry with them subtle associations and suggestions that cannot be divested from their express contents. When words are chosen to transmit ideas from one language to another these marginal meanings or atmospheric implications or overtones go along with them and mingle in their expressed ideas. The very language of the New Testament, while avowedly expressing Jewish ideas, yet shaped and colored them with Greek molds and meanings. Not only the Greek language poured into the New Testament, but along with it slipped in a stream of Greek ideas that affected the form and teaching of the book. Any important Greek word in it is more or less saturated with Greek thought and life.

Important Instances

Not only so, but there are instances in which Greek words with their ideas were deliberately adopted for the purpose of expressing the gospel in terms that would be understood in the Gentile world. A notable instance of this is the word "Logos" translated "Word" in the opening verses of John's

Gospel. This word was in use in the Greek city of Alexandria and was expressly used by the philosopher Philo, a Jewish Hellenist or Grecian Jew of that city, as a designation of the divine reason in action, or deity expressing itself in self-revelation or creation. Philo was a mediator between Judaism and Greek philosophy and used the word as a bridge or link bringing the two together and making Judaism acceptable to Greeks. John thus found the word shaped to his use and applied it to Christ. As a word is the revelation or expression of the mind, so is Christ the Logos or glorious Word or revelation of God, or God in action and self-revelation. It is true that John put a fuller Christian meaning into the word, and yet he adopted this Greek word as a means of expressing and interpreting Christ to the readers of his day in whose language he was writing. To some of his Jewish readers this may have looked like paganizing the gospel or a dangerous form of "modernism." But John boldly used it and ran the risk of any such misinterpretation because he was writing for Greeks and the word carried the gospel into their minds with a meaning that no other word would express.

There are countless instances in which Greek words not only expressed but imparted fresh meaning to the gospel ideas. Another notable instance is the word translated "propitiation" in Romans 3:25, a critical word in connection with Christ's atoning death. Recent light has been thrown upon this word from its use in Greek worship in which it was applied to a sacrifice offered to God to appease or satisfy the deity and thus the word supports the sacrificial doctrine of atonement. Deissmann's studies in the Greek of the New Testament has thrown a flood of light upon this subject.

DOCTRINAL ELEMENTS

Not only Greek words, however recharged with Christian meanings, necessarily carry Greek implications into the teaching of the New Testament, but elements of Greek philosophy and theology were also assimilated with and incorporated in it. Paul's letters are especially colored and tinctured with these Greek ideas more or less derived from or influenced by pagan philosophies and religious cults. Points of contact and affinity of Paul with Plato and Seneca and other philosophers have been pointed out by the scholars. It appears that Paul is dipping his pen into Greek philosophy in Colossians 1:17 where he says that in Christ "all things consist" or "hold together," which is in line with the Greek philosophy of the divine immanence that all things "live and move and have their being" in God, so prevalent in Greek thought where it bordered on if it did not lose itself in pantheism. Paul, however, keeps clear of this pit, but makes the gospel speak the same language. In a similar way Christianity appropriated Roman elements of thought, especially of law and a world empire, which fitted in with and gave a grand background to its own doctrines of law and a world kingdom.

Christianity has a native affinity with all truth and absorbs and assimilates it from any source, and so as it went through the world it appropriated Greek thought and Roman law and pagan religion, and has done this in its march down through the centuries. It has enormous digestive capacity and has thus grown and enriched itself through its whole history. The same process is going on to-day and more extensively than ever. It seized and digested the Copernican astronomy and then modern geology and so has adjusted itself to and incorporated in itself the truth in all our modern science and culture. It is thus that it keeps abreast of every age and does not fall behind the growing thoughts of men and wither away.

In thus tracing the presence of Greek and Roman elements in the New Testament it is not meant that pagan ideas were imported into the gospel so as to change its essential principles and teaching, but only that Christianity manifested and exercised its affinity with all truth and assimilated it wherever it found it. As Fairweather says, "Hellenism affected the structural form of Christianity, but not its essential content." Our growing knowledge does not destroy old truth or any truth, but only seeks to assimilate the old with the new. Christianity is not the poorer and weaker because of this process, but when it is carefully guarded it contributes to it with each age elements that make it all the stronger and richer.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why was the New Testament written in Greek?
2. How does the translation of ideas from one language into another affect the ideas?
3. Give instances of important Greek words that modified Christian doctrines.
4. Does our English translation color our New Testament?
5. Is Christianity still absorbing truth from other languages and from all our growing knowledge?

LXXVI

HOW WAS EARLY CHRISTIANITY AFFECTED BY PAGANISM?[1]

CHRISTIANITY early came into contact and conflict with various pagan cults and this process also entered it so as to modify it in some degree. One of the most prevalent and powerful of these cults was Gnosticism and we take this as the chief instance in which Christianity was affected by them.

GNOSTICISM

Gnosticism was a widespread pagan religion in the first and second Christian centuries having much in common with the Oriental mystery religions, the distinctive feature of which was that they were of the nature of secret societies with doctrines and rites communicated only to their initiates and thus were private religions appealing to individuals; whereas public religions, like Christianity, were open in their doctrines and rites and appealed to communities and nations and the world. Gnosticism probably originated in Persia and was based on the fundamental dualism of spirit and matter, or light and darkness, in eternal conflict. It therefore held that matter is essentially evil, and that spirit mysteriously fell into and became entangled with matter, which fall is the cause of all the confusion and misery of the world. Redemption consists in a process of rescue from this fallen state and ascent through stages into pure spirit or light. God is the Supreme Power from which issue successive "æons" or "demiurges" or lower deities who create the world and redeem entangled souls. The "gnosis," which is the Greek word for knowledge, designates the secret knowledge by which the initiate effects his deliverance, and this "gnosis" is of the nature of vision, ecstasy and supernatural revelation.

---

[1] Portions of this and of several following chapters have been abridged and adapted from the author's work on *Old Faith and New Knowledge*.

This system assumed various forms in different countries and under different leaders, but these ideas were common to all its branches. It has some obvious points of connection with Christianity, as it is a religion of fall and redemption, and some of the Gnostics seized upon these points of similarity and effected a degree of fusion between the two faiths. Some Christian theologians also found some affinity between the two religions and merged them into a degree of unity.

Scholars find some traces of Gnostic influences in the New Testament. Paul was not immune to this influence and his catholic sympathies and absorptive soul may have assimilated more from it than we can detect. In Colossians, the most philosophical as Romans is the most theological of his Epistles, his teaching (1:16) that Christ is creator of all things "in the heavens above and upon the earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers" exalts him over these Gnostic "æons" and "demiurges"; and in Ephesians (6:12) he may be referring to the Gnostic lower deities when he urges Christians to put on the whole armor of God "against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." And when in the same chapter (19) he speaks of "the mystery of the gospel" he may be suggesting and offering a better "mystery" than that of Gnosticism.

Fundamental Antagonism

It was soon discovered, however, that Christianity and Gnosticism were in fundamental antagonism. The supreme God of Gnosticism was an impersonal and impassive Fate, its demiurge Savior was only a secondary emanation caught in the same coils, and human souls were only fitful gleams and sparks. The vital breath of Christianity would be smothered and squeezed out of it by this iron constriction. Christian theology could not possibly live under the same roof with Persian mythology. Christianity then set itself against Gnosticism with destructive logic and life and drove it from the field so that by the end of the second century it was on the decline and passed on to its extinction.

Yet Mutual Modifications

Nevertheless, we can see that Christianity and Gnosticism were both more or less consciously trying to harmonize and unify their total knowledge and experience, each selecting from the other the elements that it found true and incorporating them in its own system. In particular, Christianity underwent modifications in the process. The conflict forced it to form a more definite statement of its doctrines and thus started the church on the road to creed making. It had to forge and sharpen its defensive and offensive weapons and this forced it to study its own history and Scriptures. "The Gnostics," says Harnack, "were the theologians of the first century; they were the first to treat tradition and the primitive Christian Scriptures systematically," and thus were fathers and forerunners of the historical study of the Bible. The conflict hastened the formation of the New Testament canon. It emphasized the need of efficient church organizations and developed the eldership into episcopacy and helped to generate the Catholic ideal that reached its climax in Rome. It strengthened the tendency to Christian asceticism in opposition to Gnostic libertinism, poured into Christianity a richer strain of mysticism, perhaps contributing something to the mystical atmosphere of the Fourth Gospel, intensified the sacramental side of Christian worship, and stimulated among Christian scholars the spirit of theological research, as the Gnostic teachers were men of philosophical mind and thus foreshadowed modern criticism.

In these and other points Christianity sought to disarm and displace Gnosticism by offering better Christian for Gnostic forms, taking Gnostic ideas and deepening and enriching them out of its own deeper and richer life. At every point Christianity showed itself a truer and more satisfying religion than Gnosticism and thus expelled it by the expulsive power of a better faith. Yet in so doing it absorbed something from the very system it was opposing and thereby strengthened and enriched its own life. It was gathering into itself all the truth of its day, winnowing out the wheat and rejecting the chaff, and seeking to unify its total knowledge and experience. This process is still going on and there are even now arising distinctive types of Christianity as in Europe and America and in India and China and Japan.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. How numerous and prevalent were pagan religions in the first Christian century?
2. How did Christianity treat them?
3. Can we trace elements of pagan teaching in the New Testament?
4. What became of these pagan religions?
5. How does Christianity deal with non-Christian religions to-day?

LXXVII

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS ACCOMPLISH?

The Church Fathers were Christian scholars and leaders from the second to the fifth centuries of the Christian era, who defended Christianity in its conflicts with paganism and adapted it to the intellectual and political conditions of their time. Leading Greek Fathers were Clement of Alexandria (150-215); Origen of Alexandria (182-251); Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (293-273) and opponent of Arius, the first great heretic of the Christian church; Chrysostom Patriarch of Constantinople (344-407), the golden mouthed preacher of his day. Leading Latin Fathers were Tertullian of Carthage (155-222); Jerome (340-420), great scholar and editor of the Latin Vulgate; Ambrose (340-397), Bishop of Milan; and Augustine (354-430) of Carthage, the most powerful theologian of the ancient church. These and other scholars did valiant service in defending Christianity and adjusting it to their times.

The New World into Which Christianity Entered

When Christianity was launched out upon the deep of the Greco-Roman world it found itself in a new climate. The Greek climate was that of philosophy and science. Plato and Aristotle ruled that world from their mighty urns and the spell of their spirit was everywhere in the air. The Hebrew mind was neither philosophical nor scientific, but religious and mystical. The Greeks with their intellectual genius that has never been surpassed, if equaled, had developed a large body of scientific observation and philosophic speculation which is the foundation of our modern knowledge. They studied nature to observe and classify its facts and deduce its laws and reach rational explanations of its events; and they had speculated profoundly on the deeper problems of the cause of the world, the nature of man and the existence of God. They had thus thrown upon the world a light of explanation and speculation that was unfriendly to pagan religions and these were dying under its pitiless exposure.

Christianity emerging out of its provincial unscientific Hebrew heredity and environment and seclusion, found itself face to face with this world of philosophy and science and soon discovered that it must take account of it, both to reject and resist its errors, and to accept and incorporate in its own system its elements of truth. The Greek Fathers undertook this work and successfully negotiated it according to their lights. They were imbued with the Greek spirit of philosophic insight and scientific reasoning and endeavored to amalgamate their Christian doctrines and their Greek ideas into harmony and unity. Greek ideas of divine immanence bordering on pantheism were interfused with Hebrew ideas of divine sovereignty resulting in a concept of God more complex than the monotheism of the Old Testament and affording room for and affinity with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. All the doctrines of Christianity were thus thrown into the mill of Greek philosophy and science and came out in a somewhat different shape and texture. The detailed account of these conflicts and adjustments and the way they were worked out by different Greek Fathers can be found in the histories of Christian doctrine.

Great discussions and heated controversies arose over these highly abstract problems and the streets of Alexandria, where clashed the followers of Athanasius and Arius, rang with violent debates or were crowded with turbulent mobs shouting for one or the other side. These controversies precipitated great councils, notably that of Nicæa in 325, where opposing theories and groups came to grips, and while imperial soldiers maintained order epochal decisions were made.

The Latin Fathers

The Latin Fathers lived in a somewhat different world and encountered other problems from that of the Greek theologians. They were immediately under the shadow of the Roman Empire and breathed its atmosphere. Their ideas and problems were those of authority and law, policy and administration. They were lawyers and orators rather than philosophers and poets, practical doers rather than abstract thinkers and dreamers. They handled the case of Christianity at the bar of Rome as legal advocates rather than as theologians and rhetoricians. They followed the methods and spirit of the Roman Forum rather than of the Greek Academy. They were more interested in polity than in doctrine and were more concerned in building a church organization on the foundation and pattern of the Empire than in framing a system of theology. Augustine in the West, however, was an exception as he was not only a builder of the church but also a theologian who has left his impress on our theology to this day. This process of meeting existing conditions and adjusting the old faith to the new knowledge was inevitable and inescapable and has been going on down into our time. Christianity had to make this adjustment or perish along with the pagan cults that refused to and could not do it.

The Outcome of the Process

We thus see that the Church Fathers were endeavoring to work their Hebrew faith and Greek ideas and Roman ideals into harmony. That they did not always reach the truth in their results and incorporated in Christianity some incongruous Greek ideas and overloaded it with Roman ideals that burdened and hindered Christianity and cling to it as fetters to this day, is to be freely admitted. Especially did the Latin Fathers lay the foundations of Roman Catholicism and helped to Romanize Christianity as well as to Christianize Rome. All this is quite in accordance with the principle and process of adjusting old faith with new elements of knowledge. This the Church Fathers did with such success as they were able to achieve. They saw that they could not hold the old faith unless they could correlate it with the new culture which was so fatal to the dying pagan cults. And so the Church Fathers saved the Christian faith for their day as we must save it for our day.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Name as many as you can of the Greek and of the Latin Church Fathers.
2. How did the Greco-Roman world differ from the Jewish world?
3. How did Greek philosophy affect Christian teaching?
4. What Roman ideas affected Christian doctrine?
5. How is this process of modifying Christian teaching by our growing knowledge going on to-day?

LXXVIII

WHAT WERE THE ANCIENT COUNCILS AND CREEDS?

A church council is the result of an accumulated strain in the faith and life of a church which threatens disruption and finds adjustment and relief in a creed that endeavors to unify its advanced knowledge and experience in an up-to-date expression.

The First Two Councils in Jerusalem

This principle and process are perfectly exemplified in the first two councils in Jerusalem with reference to the relations of Christianity to the Gentiles. The point at issue, as we have seen, was the relation of the Gentile converts to the Christian church. At first all Christians were Jews and supposed that Christianity was only a fulfilled Judaism. But soon the question arose as to the admission of the Gentiles, dividing the church into conservatives and liberals and producing a strain that threatened strife and division. The first council in Jerusalem adjusted the situation by admitting the Gentiles, and this was a far forward step and was in itself an epochal revolution. The question, however, was deep seated and presently arose in the later demand of the Judaizers that the Gentile converts be subjected to the Mosaic rites and this opened the old cleavage and precipitated another council. This resulted in a decree admitting Gentiles without circumcision, the first ecumenical decision and creed of the church. This again relieved the strain, and the faith and the life of the church were again harmonized and brought up to date.

The Council of Nicæa

The same principle runs down through all the councils and creeds of the church to this day. The first great critical issue in the post Apostolic church arose in the fourth century in the conflict between Athanasius and Arius over the fundamental doctrine of the person of Christ. Athanasius (293-373), Bishop of Alexandria, took the position that Christ is of the same substance with the Father and thereby held to his proper deity. Arius (256-336), a presbyter in Alexandria, held that Christ is only of a similar substance with the Father and thereby reduced him to the rank of a creature, though the highest. These two views spread and gathered followers and debate ran high. Alexandria itself, the leading university city and seat of Christianity of the day, became a burning center of the controversy which grew into a furious popular and political issue. The church was severely strained from center to circumference and grave consequences were impending. The result was the Council of Nicæa in 325 A.D., where amidst much excitement and heat the rival doctrines and parties clashed and the outcome was the Nicene creed declaring that Christ is of the same substance with the Father, "very God of very God." This saved the church from the Arian heresy that would have reduced Christ to a creature.

OTHER EARLY COUNCILS

Arius impaired the divine nature of Christ, but Apollinaris (310-390), Bishop of Laodicea, impaired the complete humanity of Christ by substituting in his person the divine Spirit for the human reason. This endangered Christianity from an opposite point of attack from that of Arius and again developed a strain in the church. The First Council of Constantinople (381) met this issue by restating in a fuller and more emphatic form the position of Nicæa and condemning Apollinaris, and again the strain was relieved.

There were seven of these early councils that are regarded as ecumenical and are accepted by all branches of Christianity, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestants. Among the more important of these, after Nicæa and Constantinople, were the Council of Ephesus (431), which condemned the heresy of Eutyches, a presbyter of Constantinople, who fused the two natures of Christ into a third substance neither human nor divine, and the Council of Chalcedon (451), which condemned the heresy of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who joined the two natures in a moral union and thereby impaired the unity of the person of Christ. The Chalcedonian creed practically marked the end of the development and statement of the doctrine of the person of Christ which has come to us in the creeds of our day.

OUTCOME AND METHOD

Sufficient has been said to illustrate the present point and purpose, which is not to give an account of these councils but only to show that each one of them arose out of the conditions of the time in which an accumulated strain had developed, and the council was the means of adjusting the creed expressing the solution. In each case the council with the creed was a forward step, bringing the old faith into harmony with the new knowledge and experience. Even when an error was condemned some element of the truth in it was incorporated in the new creed, and the very fact of adjustment did not leave the faith of the church just where it had been but modified it and brought it forward into closer relation with the growing faith and life of the time.

It is also to be noted that discussion and controversy was the general means by which the adjustment was brought about. Many of these controversies were fiercer than anything we now experience in adjusting our doctrinal differences, and sometimes got out upon the streets in riots and mobs. This was at least a sign that they took their religion and their creeds very seriously in those days. They knew that what they believed was as important as their conduct as the one is the root of the other. Debate has its place in all human fields and is the instrument by which the human mind forges its beliefs and shapes its character. Controversy is the courage and conscience of the soul, and when men cease to care about their religious beliefs and are equally indifferent toward all creeds, they will become equally bloodless in spirit and the day of religious conviction and heroism will be gone.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is a church council?
2. Give an account of the first two held at Jerusalem.
3. Where was Nicæa and what issue was settled there?
4. Give an account of other ancient councils.
5. Do Protestants recognize these ancient councils?

LXXIX

HOW DID THE GREEK ORTHODOX AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES ARISE?

The first deep division of Christianity split it into the Eastern Greek Orthodox and the Western Roman Catholic churches, and it is important and interesting to see how this division arose, for these churches are still with us.

The Greek Orthodox Church

In the early centuries all the churches around the Mediterranean formed one body which was originally known as "The Catholic Church," a name that then exactly fitted the church but has never done so since. These early churches developed, as we have seen, their various offices, deacons, elders, bishops, and archbishops, but they had no general organization except as they were represented in the seven ecumenical councils. The leading cities became centers and seats of growing ecclesiastical authority and power. First came the metropolitans who had administrative authority over the ordinary bishops, and then arose the patriarchs who had their seats in the great cities and had authority over the metropolitans as these had over the bishops. In time there were five of these patriarchs named after the cities in which they resided, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. There were ranks and rivalries among these patriarchs, but no one of them was supreme over the others, and the supreme authority still resided in the ecumenical councils. The Eastern Greek Orthodox Church thus gradually grew apart from the Western Roman Catholic Church, although the final separation did not take place until about 1054 A.D. The Greek Orthodox differs from the Roman Catholic in that it rejects the claims of papal supremacy, permits the marriage of its ordinary clergy but not of its bishops, permits pictures but not statues in its churches, and favors the reading of the Bible. It is nearer to Protestants in spirit than the Roman Catholic Church and will hold fellowship with them. The Greek Orthodox Church has been badly dislocated by the Great War and especially in Soviet Russia.

The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church slowly arose out of the superior position and power of Rome as the seat of the Empire and of world influence. This process was inevitable as all things in the ancient world, political, social, economic and religious, gravitated toward Rome by a kind of cosmic attraction. The church at Rome early grew to be large and wealthy and was of international influence, as is shown by the fact that it continued to use the Greek language, then the world speech, instead of the Latin in its worship for about two centuries. Paul wrote his most important Epistle to this church and then visited it and carried on his work from that commanding center and there laid down his life. The Roman church also claims that Peter labored in the city and was there martyred, although scholars do not think there is sufficient evidence to confirm this claim. In fact the Roman church claims Peter as its first Pope. It thus partook of the prestige of Rome as the capital of the Empire, and constantly grew in its claims until it assumed universal authority over the church, East and West. It also based and still bases its supreme claims on such Scripture as Matthew 16:18-19, Luke 22:31, John 21:15-19.

A complex hierarchy arose in Rome, growing through the centuries, with its clergy, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, monks, and various orders that are still in operation. Swarms of officials thronged the papal court. The papacy at first was more or less associated with and depended on political alliances with emperors, but in time it developed its claims into supremacy over the civil authorities and it crowned and discrowned emperors and kings at its pleasure. Hildebrand, known as Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), raised the papacy to its highest peak of power, excommunicating King Henry IV of Germany and requiring him to stand penitent at his gate. In the Middle Ages the pope claimed that only by his authority could a king or emperor be crowned, and when he excommunicated a ruler his doom was swift and sure.

Abuses developed in the Roman church which grew so public and scandalous that various popes endeavored to introduce reforms, these culminating in the Reformation. Worse still, from the papal point of view, dissensions arose within the hierarchy, and the papacy itself was divided with rival popes. The "Babylonian Captivity" drove seven popes to reside in Avignon in France (1309-1377), and two antipopes resided there (1378-1408). In the meantime sectional and regional differences arose, and especially did the northern countries of France and Germany grow apart from Italy, which ever increasingly asserted its dominant and despotic power.

Doctrines also continued to develop. The celibacy of the clergy early arose and has been rigidly enforced to this day. The Bible was more and more secluded from the people and the church claimed the exclusive right to interpret it. The church also claimed supremacy and control over education. These claims have been somewhat modified as a compromise with demands in Protestant countries. While the papacy still asserts its superiority over civil authorities, yet these claims are said to be held in abeyance in countries not dominantly Roman Catholic.

The Roman Catholic Church is consistent in refusing to recognize any other church, not even the Greek Orthodox, much less the Anglican which has tried to scrape acquaintance with and gain some recognition from it. It stands to-day as an absolute bar against any prospect of the unity of Christianity, though what the future may accomplish is yet to be revealed.

The *Roman Catholic Encyclopædia* gives the total number of Catholics in the world at 264,505,922, but these large figures are disputed by Protestants and ex-Catholics; and besides, the Roman Catholic Church counts population and not communicants, as the Protestants do. It is our duty as Protestants to maintain as friendly relations with Roman Catholics and even with the hierarchy as far as we can without compromising our own rights and liberties.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. State the causes of the first great division of Christianity.
2. What is the state of the Greek Orthodox Church to-day?
3. Is the Russian Orthodox Church in any degree responsible for the persecution of religion by Soviet Russia?
4. What are distinctive points of the Roman Catholic Church?
5. What should be our attitude toward the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches?

LXXX

WHAT WAS SCHOLASTICISM?

In passing from the period of the ancient church, extending from the second to the fifth century, to the scholasticism or intellectual system of the Middle Ages, extending from the ninth to the fifteenth century, Christianity again found itself in a new world with a different climate.

FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST

The scene of affairs has passed from the East to the West. The Roman Empire has vanished from its mighty stage, leaving majestic ruins to testify to its greatness and grandeur. It fell with a tremendous world-shaking crash, and its vast rim was broken into pieces that formed the modern nations of Europe. In its place we find the Roman Catholic Church, in the striking metaphor of Hobbes, "sitting as its ghost on its grave." Rome was now the seat of its authority but not of its learning. Learning has always fought shy of political capitals and seats of authority, and rarely do we find them in the same center. Learning is solicitous about the interference of authority, and authority is suspicious of the critical spirit of learning. And so the two prefer to remain at a respectful distance. When Rome was mistress of the world, the university centers were Athens and Alexandria; and when political authority deserted Rome but ecclesiastical domination set up its throne there in a more rigid discipline and despotism, learning went north and settled in Paris and Cologne and London. The old division of the Roman world into East and West was replaced by another division running at right angles to the former one and dividing the Western world into northern and southern regions.

Crystallized Church Organization

It was the time of feudalism when barons ruled their peasants and only loosely served kings, while kings held their crowns precariously by the authority, or at least by the sanction, of the pope. Church organization has crystallized into a complex and rigid system that gripped the whole life of the people, religious and civil. This did not seem to leave room for much intellectual liberty and life. It was indeed in no small degree restricted and standardized by the creeds and especially by the authority of the church. And yet the time was not at all one of intellectual stagnation and death. Powerful minds were alive and alert to discuss philosophical and religious problems, and under the surface there was going on a penetrating fermentation that prepared the way for the new and open liberty of the coming age. In the darkest ages the dim torch of learning was kept burning in the monasteries.

The Schoolmen

There are great names that shine out in this time, the "schoolmen" that gave their name to the period. Three names stand out conspicuous among them: Anselm (1033-

1109), Archbishop of Canterbury; Abelard (1079-1142), a French Scholastic philosopher; and Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274), an Italian theologian. Their problems were chiefly three: the relation of faith and reason, or of religion and science; the problem of theological doctrines, especially the work of Christ in the atonement; and the philosophical problem of the relation of names to their objects, or of realism to nominalism, a problem that has largely passed out of our modern field.

These thinkers all asserted the fundamental unity of reason and faith, but sought for an adjustment of their superficial differences and apparent antagonisms. The question of prime importance with them was, Which comes first in order, reason or faith? Anselm answered this question one way, and Abelard the other. Anselm put faith first as being the instinctive and traditional belief with which we start, and thus he was a mystic; but he allowed that when reason emerges faith must be subject to and criticized by it and come into agreement with it. Abelard put reason first because it must pass upon the form and validity of the contents of faith, and thus he was a rationalist. They were both right from our modern point of view. Faith comes first chronologically and reason logically. We still begin with traditional faith, along with Anselm, but also along with Abelard we proceed to criticize it when the mind overtakes the heart. "They thus differed," says Fairbairn, "as regards the sequence or relative priority of faith and reason, but not as regards their ultimate harmony."

Aquinas was also a rationalist but more of an eclectic than Anselm and Abelard. He restored Aristotle to a dominant place in the thinking of the schoolmen, and Greek philosophy was again enlisted to rationalize Christian doctrines. He became the ruling intellect in Roman Catholic thought and shaped the theology of this church to this day. These schoolmen also had each his own way of solving the problem of the atonement, Anselm holding to a satisfaction theory of the death of Christ and Abelard to a moral influence theory. These theories were a great advance on the doctrine of the atonement that had come down from the ancient church which held that the death of Christ was the price God paid the devil as a ransom to release his hold on fallen man.

OBJECT AND OUTCOME OF SCHOLASTICISM

We need not further pursue the object and outcome of scholasticism. The schoolmen found themselves in a highly traditionalized world in which Christian doctrines had come down cast and crystallized in the molds of other days. Ecclesiastical authority was regnant and it was dangerous to differ. Yet differences could not be kept down and the human mind could not be rigidly bound. Fetters might be placed on outer words but not on inner thinking. And even the inner reasoning and most secret thoughts of men found ways of expressing themselves outwardly in forms that escaped detection and prohibition. The schoolmen were under the necessity of rethinking the traditional doctrines and bringing the old faith into conformity with the new reasoning principles and processes. They also were endeavoring to unify their total knowledge and experience and adapt Christianity to their day. They performed this service according to their lights and then passed the problem on to us.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What caused the decline and fall of the Roman Empire?
2. How did the Roman Catholic Church come to duplicate in a degree the Roman Empire?
3. Give the distinctive doctrines of Anselm and Abelard.
4. Who was Aristotle?
5. Are the problems of these scholastic thinkers still under discussion to-day?

LXXXI

WHAT WAS THE RENAISSANCE?

The Renaissance, also known in its literary aspects as the Revival of Learning, was the springtime of our modern world and transition from the winter of the Middle Ages to the summer of our own time. Its limits can only be broadly defined as like all seasonal changes it was gradual, the winter of the Middle Ages gently and insensibly melting into the sunshine and budding life of spring. But its period fell mainly from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and this also was a transitional time for Christianity.

A Complex Movement

It was a complex movement growing out of a convergence of causes and dividing into various forms and phases. It was in effect a powerful outburst of human ability and creative energy, transforming the European world as spring transforms the earth, and is comparable to the outflowering of genius in Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. The causes of such crises and climaxes are obscure and they come and go as if independent of human agency with the irresistibleness of spring and other cosmic changes.

Like the spring, also, the Renaissance started in the south and moved north, everywhere creating a new world and awakening new seeds and songs of birds as it developed in sunny Italy and moved northward across the Alps into western and northern Europe. It broke up the mediæval crust of Europe and prepared the way for the new sowing and reaping. What a wonderful period it was! We think of our modern times, especially the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as unparalleled for revolutionary and brilliant and astounding discoveries and progress, but this may be because we forget or fail to realize the break-up of the old world and the birth of the new in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The invention of the mariner's compass, gunpowder, paper, and printing, the displacement of the pitifully small Ptolemaic heavens with the infinitely grander and profoundly revolutionizing Copernican astronomy, the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Turks with the result of shifting the center of Europe from the East to the West and especially of driving scholars and learning into the West, the immensely sensational and revolutionary event of the discovery of America, the decline of the papacy into impotency, the fall of feudalism, the revolt against despotism in church and state, the sprouting of the early seeds of democracy, the decline in authority of dogmatic orthodoxy and the birth of the critical spirit, the beginnings of inductive science and the laying of the foundations of our modern scientific knowledge of the universe, the new sense of the worth and the rights of man, the new appreciation of nature and art and the outflowering of architecture and painting and poetry and music, a new spontaneity and exuberance and freedom and joy in all things human—the whole European world was astir and abloom as is the earth when it awakens out of the winter into spring. It was as though man had acquired a new sense of the meaning and the beauty of the world and the joy of life.

Some Aspects of the Movement

The Renaissance began in Italy in the thirteenth century with the discovery of the background of the old Roman Empire whose majestic ruins lay exposed before men's eyes, like the huge bones of prehistoric animals, but to which they had long been strangely insensible. They began to study these ruins and caught a vision of "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," and began to dream of restoring them, a vision that is again stirring Italy under Mussolini. Architecture got a start and grew rapidly. Art in general, especially painting and sculpture, began to bud and by the sixteenth century bloomed into the glories of Michelangelo and Da Vinci and Raphael. The appearance of the classical scholars from Constantinople bringing with them their manuscripts opened to Europe the treasures of classical literature, and Plato and Aristotle arose out of their ancient tombs in Athens and taught again in Rome and Florence and Milan. This led to the Revival of Learning, one aspect of the Renaissance, that gave fresh impetus to the whole movement. Another aspect of the movement was the Humanism that opened a new interest in man and in human life as the soil out of which literature and art spring. Italy thus began to swarm with scholars, archæologists, architects, painters, sculptors, poets, romanticists, and the country became vocal with their music as the songs of birds fill the spring. As the Renaissance moved northward it kindled secular and sacred learning into life in Germany and Switzerland, and Erasmus and Reuchlin and Zwingli were leaders of Humanism in the north. The greatest literary work of Erasmus was his annotated edition of the Greek New Testament that brought men into immediate contact with the original record and primitive form of Christianity and opened their eyes to its purity and simplicity, and showed how far Roman Christianity had departed from its original patterns, and to the hollow pageantry and appalling immorality that then prevailed.

Effect upon Christianity

Christianity was profoundly affected by the Renaissance. The new knowledge and spirit, that was like the breath of spring to all things else, could not be kept out of the church, but invaded and pervaded it and began to dissolve its mediæval forms and bonds. Christianity could not stand aloof and be immune from the change of climate that was creeping over all Western Europe and waking it out of death into life. It, too, had to submit to the process of reforming the old and conforming it to the new order to save its life and to live on in the new world. This profound change was more fully effected in the Reformation, which was the chief outcome and final phase of the Renaissance, but already Christianity carried in its bosom the principles and seeds of the new day and was bound to bring them to full birth and fruitage.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What does the word "renaissance" mean?
2. How do there come to be such sudden outbursts of genius as in Greece and Europe?
3. Name some of the epochal events of this time in Europe?
4. What was the Revival of Learning?
5. Did the Renaissance help or hinder Christianity?

LXXXII

WHAT WAS THE REFORMATION?

SPRING brings storms. The changing temperatures create areas of unequal pressure with resulting winds and clouds and electric strain that issue in a storm with discharge of lightning and downpour of rain that relieve the tension and restore climatic balance. Such a storm may leave destruction in its track, but also fresher air and greener fields and bluer skies and a more fruitful earth.

THE REFORMATION WAS A STORM

The Reformation was such a storm. Conditions of strain had long been accumulating, the spring of the Renaissance released these and precipitated a storm that reverberated widely over Europe and did much damage to the social fabric, but was a means of a new and better world. The Reformation was not simply a religious but was also a political and economic event. The state of the Roman Catholic Church was a primary condition of this epochal upheaval, but not the only cause. Rome was a gigantic despotism that gripped and strangled the whole life of the Middle Ages in both church and state. In fact the two had been fused into one. The pope claimed to be the supreme Vicegerent of God in things secular as well as spiritual, and kings and emperors were often puppets in his hands. The Roman Catholic Church had reproduced to a startling degree of likeness and on a grander scale the later Judaism with its splendid temple and gorgeous pageantry and hypocritical and corrupt religion, outwardly white as a marble sepulcher but inwardly full of corruption. Ground down under this pitiless mass and weight of despotic power and worldliness and splendor groaned the oppressed peasantry as they suffered in silence but were storing up wrath for the day of rebellion and destruction.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther was the man for this hour, the spark that exploded this magazine, the electric flash that released the tension and precipitated the storm. He was a man with more emotional power than intellectual discernment and logical acumen, stronger on the destructive than on the constructive side, a big rough man who could strike tremendous blows and was more intent on clearing evils out of the way and getting things done than cautious and considerate and nice and gentle about the way of doing them; a man of dynamic energy who, once aroused, was a lion of strength and courage and wrath.

Already Humanism in northern Europe with its studies of the Greek New Testament and Church Fathers had uncovered the long hidden original records of Christianity and the simplicity of the primitive church. Luther, an orthodox and submissive monk, had his eyes opened to the situation. Salvation by the rubbish of Roman works was displaced in his mind with salvation of justification by faith. The scandalous traffic in papal indulgences by an itinerant peddler of such wares in his neighborhood was only a trivial incident in the life of Luther, a spark that started the fire. His action, once he was ready, was swift and decisive. He was then a professor of philosophy in the University of Wittenberg, and on the memorable 31st of October, 1517, he nailed on the door of the Wittenberg church his ninety-five theses against indulgences, and every stroke of that hammer was heard through Europe and eventually around the world. Three years later he burned in the public square the Papal Bull excommunicating him and started a fire that is burning to this day.

JOHN CALVIN

Luther thus severed as with a sword the greater part of northern Europe from the papacy and created Protestantism. Other men, of course, wrought in the same cause. John Calvin at Geneva did a work of possibly deeper and more lasting importance than that of Luther, though Luther was the pioneer. If Luther was the mighty heart of the Reformation, Calvin was its brain. These men so widely different in endowment and temperament yet singularly complemented each other in this epochal event. Luther started the fire that generated the energy of the Reformation, but Calvin forged its doctrinal system that was its logical foundation and lasting framework. Luther was a mighty doer, but Calvin was a logical thinker, and the two together wrought this great revolution in the religious world and flung their shadows down upon us.

Unhappy accompaniments attended the Reformation. At once it became mixed with the politics of the day; kings and princes took a hand in it and its track was bathed in blood. The peasantry seized the opportunity of the occasion to rise in a terrible insurrection against despotism, in which they received no sympathy and help from Luther. While the Reformation asserted the right of private judgment and freedom of the individual conscience, yet it sowed the seeds of a despotism of its own, substituting for the infallibility of the pope the infallibility of its own dogmas and thereby forged fetters that long restricted freedom of conscience in the church.

The Outcome

Yet with all their failures due to the condition of the times, these men wrought valiantly for us and we are entered into their labors. When the storm of the Reformation subsided, it left a purer atmosphere and the seeds of a fairer day. Southern Europe was little affected by it, as it is to this day, but northern Europe was almost wholly torn loose from Rome and set free to develop its own religious and civil liberty and life. The Reformers went to school along with the Humanists and they, too, lived in the springtime when the sun of truth was shining with clearer and warmer rays. They, too, dragged the Bible out of the obscurity in which it had long been hidden and caused it to throw a flood of light on Christianity. They unbound the human brain and gave it its right and freedom to study and think for itself, and thus to unify its own knowledge and experience. This process was working in the background and at the root of the whole tremendous upheaval of the Reformation, and this principle and process are still working in our day.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. How did the Renaissance lead to the Reformation?
2. What need was there of a reformation in the Roman Catholic Church?
3. Why did the Reformation affect southern Europe less than northern Europe?
4. What was the Counter-Reformation?
5. What do we owe to the Reformation?

LXXXIII

HOW DID THE MODERN CHURCHES ARISE?

THERE is a remarkable parallel between the Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church: the one passed away and the other came into its place, "as its ghost sitting on its grave," in no small degree passing through the same phases and repeating its history. The Roman Empire divided into the East and the West, and the ancient Catholic Church divided into the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches. Next, the Roman Empire in the west fell with a mighty crash and its great segments became the modern nations of Europe. In a similar way the Roman Catholic Church fell apart and its fragments in northern Europe became the Protestant churches. The Roman Catholic Church developed the political and despotic form and spirit of the Roman Empire, while the Protestant churches generally assumed democratic forms of government as did the northern nations of Europe.

THE TRAGEDY OF PROTESTANTISM

It was the immeasurable and irreparable tragedy of Protestantism that it did not cohere in unity and present a solid front to the Roman Catholic Church and to the world; but it lacked this cohesive power and has broken into hundreds of bodies ranging in size from very small sects with only a handful of members and perhaps only a single congregation to large denominations and national churches with millions of adherents. The same seeds of division that separated Protestantism from Rome remained in its own bosom to divide itself into many separatist bodies which are still dividing. This charge is brought against Protestantism by Roman Catholics, and the charge is true. Division is not only still going on, but it is about as hard and hopeless a problem as ever to get any two or more of them to unite. This is the greatest weakness of Protestantism and there is little sign as yet that it may soon be overcome, though the tide appears to have turned and a step in this direction was accomplished at the Lausanne World Conference on Faith and Order in August, 1927.

Existing Christian Bodies

Christianity to-day is divided into the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the various Protestant churches. The Reformers in founding their churches did not revert to primitive forms of church government but followed local national examples and this was a dividing principle. The Lutherans followed the leadership of Luther and became dominant in Germany, Denmark and Scandinavia, and then spread to this country where they have divided into four main bodies. The Reformed churches followed Calvin who set up in Geneva the Presbyterian form of government by elders, and this system spread through Bohemia and Hungary, France and the Netherlands and especially took root in Scotland. The Anglican Church followed a different leadership as the English Church was torn loose from Rome by Henry VIII who himself assumed its headship. Presbyterianism also found some footing in England and other bodies arising in England were the Independents or Congregationalists and the Baptists. These two latter bodies were the most democratic in government of all the Protestant churches. All of these bodies have been transplanted to North America and are very strong in the United States. The Roman Catholic Church has almost exclusive possession of South America, less than one-quarter of one per cent of the population in these countries being Protestant. All these churches, also, have planted themselves around the world in foreign missions. They have also each tried to follow and express, embody and propagate its own sense and type of truth and experience, and hence these different types of Christianity which are still producing new forms as in India and China and Japan.

CHANGE IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In spite of its pronounced conservatism and declared unchangeability the Roman Catholic Church has undergone and is still undergoing changes, though less rapidly than the Protestant bodies. It cannot keep itself immune from the changes of soil and climate to which it is exposed as it moves on through the centuries and into different countries and civilizations. Protestants need to revise some of their traditional notions of the Roman Catholic Church: that it never changes; that it is wholly corrupt and apostate and is the "antichrist," "the man of sin," "the woman upon a scarlet-colored beast," "the mother of harlots drunken with the blood of saints," of John's Apocalypse; in short, that it is not a church and is not Christian. This view has been quietly erased from our Protestant creeds, as from the Westminster Confession, and is passing from all Protestant circles. The whole history of the Roman Catholic Church prior to the Reformation belongs to us all and must be acknowledged as our mother church. It has a glorious roll of apostles, martyrs, missionaries, saints, that are our common heritage. And it has had men of light and leading in its communion to this day.

MODERN COUNCILS AND CREEDS

Modern councils and creeds, like the ancient ones, have been the result of a strain in church policy or doctrine which accumulated to a point threatening revolt or rupture and called for adjustment that again unified the church. The Roman Catholic Church lists twenty ecumenical councils, the last one being the Vatican Council (1869-1870), which defined the doctrine of papal infallibility. The Protestants have also held innumerable councils, assemblies, or conferences, which have framed or revised their creeds, such as the Lutheran Augsburg Confession (1539), the

Anglican Thirty-nine Articles (1571), the Presbyterian Westminster Confession (1644-1647), and others in our own country. Each Protestant creed was adopted as a synthetic statement of the "system of doctrine" held by its adherents and thus was adjusted to the changing knowledge and conditions of its day. Thus the continuity of the historic faith was conserved and yet progress was maintained.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Draw the parallel between the Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church and explain how it came about.
2. Why did Protestantism divide into so many branches?
3. Are the divisions of Protestantism altogether evil?
4. Ought we to try to unite these divisions?
5. Are there any internal divisions in the Roman Catholic Church?

LXXXIV

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The soul must have a body, ideas must have hands and feet. The first Christians were organized into societies, and the church is the body of Christ in the world.

Jesus Himself Founded a Church

Jesus himself founded a church. He did not simply cast his ideas out into the air to survive or perish, but committed them to men whom he had trained to receive and propagate them. At first he attempted to work inside the Jewish church, but this plan was soon abandoned. The old organization had lost vitality and elasticity and had become inhospitable and intractable to new ideas and further adaptation; it had crystallized into traditionalism that refused to yield to new demands; it had gone to seed in its husk and would bear no more fruit. Jesus therefore was forced to work outside its bounds and to lay new foundations. He left the temple with its elaborate ritual and resorted to the simpler synagogue and from the synagogue was driven to the street and seashore. Out in the open, freed from the restrictions of the past, he made a new start. He gathered twelve men of unsophisticated minds around him for three years and poured into them his own mind and molded them to his purpose. Jesus mentioned the church only twice, once in referring to the local congregation (Matt. 18:17), and again in referring to the church universal (Matt. 16:18). But nothing is said in the Gospels about the organization, policy, officers and ordinances of the church, except that Jesus adopted the rite of baptism and instituted the Lord's Supper. Thus Christ himself made little of the church and gave only its germ and left its development to later times.

Its Development

This development proceeds in the Acts and Epistles and other books of the New Testament, in which the church fills a large place, being mentioned one hundred and twelve times. As the apostles went forth preaching they founded churches and rapidly planted them around the Mediterranean shore. These were at first only informal groups of believers who simply met for worship. There were no officials, polity or creed, but they were simply democratic bodies of people that acted together with one mind They were designated as the "beloved of God" and "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ (Col. 1:2). But presently there was need of concerted action, and then organization and officers were necessary. The outstanding fact on this subject is that there are no divinely appointed or authoritative officers and polities enjoined upon the church in the New Testament, but, as we have already seen, these grew up as they were needed to meet existing conditions. Deacons were first elected and then came elders and others such as prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, healings and helps (I Cor. 12:28). The newborn church was full of life and gave birth to many offices and activities, some of which were short lived and others survived. The apostles were the original witnesses of Christ and could not be replaced, but there is not a word in the New Testament about handing down an office by apostolic succession. The development of these simple offices into a vast hierarchy was the work of later ages.

The Unity of the Church

The simple democratic original forms of the church at length became caught in the vast mesh of Roman imperialism and gradually grew into a counterpart of Rome. The church became a worldly despotism and had unity with a vengeance But the system broke to pieces of its own weight and corruption, first into the Eastern and Western churches and then into Protestantism. Union is now a growing idea and spirit among the divided branches of Protestantism, but they can never go back to the mechanical monarchic basis of church unity. Such a basis has no ground in the New Testament, which is a democratic book through and through and exhibits only democratic churches. "As God's people," says Fairbairn, "are a free people, he allows them to organize their own polities, the best polities always being the most deeply rooted in love, and so most creative of the spiritual redeeming graces." Mechanical unity was tried on an immense scale when Europe was all under one ecclesiastical roof, and it proved impracticable and dangerous and had to be broken up, never to be restored. The true unity of the church is biological and not mechanical or political, the unity of the spirit for which Christ prayed. Of course there are too many branches and fragments and all the various families should be unified, but the church need not be really divided while it is differentiated in many members of the one body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27).

Creed and Ordinances

It is surprising how small a part the question of a creed played in the New Testament churches as compared with the tremendous part it has played in historic Christianity and still plays in our modern churches. The germs of creeds are found in the New Testament, but these are only broad and simple statements which have little resemblance to our elaborate creeds. Christ virtually made Peter's utterance, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the basal creed of his church. Yet the question of a formal statement of Christian faith as a basis of Christian fellowship was bound to arise. It is this question with all its accompanying controversies that shows that Christian truth is still living, a growing body and not a fossilized system. The church must revise and rewrite its creeds in every generation and thus bring them up to date into harmony with wider knowledge and experience.

Ordinances have ever proved dangerous in religion, the outer form constricting the inner spirit, the husk smothering the grain. Yet every religion has them, and the Christian church must have them. Baptism came into the Christian church through the Jewish system, but was invested with new significance. The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of personal fellowship with Christ and a pledge of renewed loyalty to him. It is simple, universal and beautiful in its elements and significance. Jesus put emphasis on these ordinances as of vital importance, and his true followers will never regard them lightly, but will be faithful in their observance "till he come."

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Why did Jesus withdraw from the Jewish church?
2. Why are church organizations necessary?
3. Trace the growth of the church through the first Christian centuries.
4. What are some unhappy features of our churches?
5. How should we love the church?

LXXXV

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

THE kingdom of God is God's rule on earth and in heaven. It is a larger idea and entity than that of the church, being the end to which the church is a means reaching through time into eternity.

IN THE UNIVERSE

In the widest sense the kingdom of God includes the whole universe. All the physical elements and operations of the world are the immediate working of the mind and will of God, and therefore are his direct control and absolute rule. However tangled and chaotic the physical world may seem to us at points, it is a kingdom of perfect order in which no atom ever gets out of place and all things work together in beautiful harmony. All spirits, also, human and superhuman, are included within the reign of this kingdom. Isaiah expresses the absoluteness of this reign when he represents Jehovah as saying, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things." This statement leaves room for a distinction in the mode of God's creation of these moral opposites, but it asserts his reign over them.

IN OBEDIENT SOULS

The phrase kingdom of God, however, is used in a narrower sense as designating God's reign in obedient souls, and this is the sense in which it is commonly used in the Scriptures. The Old Testament is pervaded with the idea of such a kingdom. The Hebrew monarchy was viewed as a form of it, and the prophets paint glowing pictures of its future perfection and power. The vision varies in its features. Sometimes the outer form of the kingdom is emphasized, and at other times its inner moral and spiritual character; sometimes it relates specially to Israel, and then again the Gentiles are included in its universal sweep. It came to its fullest expression in Daniel: "And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." As time went on the spiritual elements of the picture faded and material colors came out more strongly, until when Christ came the Jews were passionately cherishing the hope of a worldly kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital and themselves in its chief offices. This danger of lapsing from spiritual to material views of the kingdom has ever attended religion and it befell Christianity itself.

THE KINGDOM IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

Jesus rescued the idea of the kingdom from its Jewish perversion and restored it to its spiritual purity. The kingdom fills a large place in his teaching, the term occurring one hundred and twelve times in the Gospels while the church is mentioned only twice. His first announcement was that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and during his ministry "Jesus went about in Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." The characteristic feature of this kingdom in the New Testament is its spirituality. Unlike the church it has no human organization, officers, ceremonies, ordinances. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." It is not a matter of outward place, but of inner disposition, it is a state of mind. Its ideal is to bring every thought into conformity with the truth and grace of God, every motive and deed into coincidence with his will. The redeemed soul has the kingdom of God within itself. And from such souls as centers it is to spread through society, winning converts and imparting its spirit as a leaven to all human institutions and thus subduing the world to God. In so far as the kingdom is realized the world is immanent in God and God is immanent in the world.

THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM

The future of the kingdom discloses an extended prospect of growth and struggle ending in final triumph. Much of the teaching of Jesus with respect to the kingdom, such as the parables of the seed and of the leaven, implies a long period during which it is slowly to spread over the field of the world or through the whole lump of humanity. Yet this growth is also a warfare in which truth contends with error and good with evil; and at times the conflict thickens up into battles that may convulse the church and the world. There are indications that the kingdom of darkness will increase its enmity and opposition as the kingdom of light grows more intense, and thus titanic struggles may come in later times.

But all prophecies and promises of Scripture run forward to a final triumph of the kingdom of God. Christianity is to pervade and mold our civilization more and more until it becomes dominant. Holiness unto the Lord is to be written on the very bells of the horses—all agents and activities are to be stamped and imbued with the Christian spirit and devoted to Christian ends. Finally, there is to go up a great shout, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." It is in some instances difficult to tell whether such predictions are to be realized in this world or in the next, as it is sometimes difficult to tell in a gorgeous sunset just where the earth ends and the sky begins. But all things are rolling on toward this great consummation, the "one far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves," and if it is only partially realized in this world, it will come to its perfect and final fulfillment in that city of God which is his eternal and glorious kingdom.

In the meantime it is our duty to strive, through faith and prayer, resolution and obedience to expel the anarchy of sin from our souls and from the world and to bring every thought and imagination into loyal and loving submission to the will of our King, which is the kingdom of God within us.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why did Jesus preach so much about the kingdom and so little about the church?
2. What is the relation of the church to the kingdom?
3. Where and what is the kingdom of God?
4. How can we tell when we are in the kingdom?
5. How can we extend and build the kingdom of God in the world?

LXXXVI

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

WORSHIP is our sense of the worthship of God, the two verbal forms being but slightly different spellings of the same word. Our worship or worthship of anything is our measure of its worth or use to us, its cash value in our market, and this idea literally applies to God himself. As he is the supreme form and sum of good in our lives, our worship of him should express this sense and measure of his value.

PRAYER

This sense of the value of God first comes to expression in prayer. Prayer is the communion of the soul with God in which it pours itself out in adoration, thanksgiving, confession and supplication, all of these expressing or implying our sense of God's worth. Such relation to God is just as natural and necessary as a child's speech to its father, and it is an impulse of the human heart that operates with the universality and spontaneity and force of our other fundamental and permanent impulses and instincts. We need not stop to consider difficulties in the way of prayer, such as its relation to natural law, for, as Mr. A. J. Balfour, one of our profoundest philosophical thinkers, says, "these are difficulties of theory, and not of practice. They never disturb the ordinary man nor the extraordinary man in his ordinary moments. Human intercourse is not embarrassed by the second, nor simple piety by the first. And perhaps the enlightened lounger, requesting a club waiter to shut the window, brushes aside, or ignores, as many philosophical puzzles as a mother passionately praying for her child." Prayer, then, is grounded in the objective reality of the relation between the soul and God. While it consists in a degree in making known unto God all our needs and desires, yet it is mostly concerned with spiritual interests and consists largely in communion with God. Prayer calms and clears the vision and spiritualizes the soul in the presence of God so as to see all things in the light of his wisdom and thus it is enabled to know and do his will. "The prayer of a righteous man," says James 5:16 as translated by Dr. Rendal Harris, "is of great force when energized."

MUSIC AND SONG

Another element in worship is music and song. Music is the language of feeling, as speech is primarily the language of thought. The heart beats rhythmically. Words are a poor utterance even for the mind. The heart drops such cumbrous crutches and takes to the soaring wings of song. Music is a voice to its joy and a tongue to its sorrow. When a bliss is born in the soul it instinctively sings as the angels sang at the birth of Christ. In sorrow, the first solemn chords of the instrument or notes of the choir let forth fresh floods of grief. How often do we have emotions that we cannot express or even understand until some touching melody or massive chords give utterance to them, and then we experience relief and satisfaction. No feeling is fully expressed until it has gushed forth in song.

Music rises to its noblest flights in worship. The Bible is full of song. All through the Scriptures we are commanded to sing unto the Lord; to praise him with harp and trumpet and organ; to speak in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We have not fully felt the gospel until we have sung it. Atheism is not singable and produces no songs or grand music. Music has given wings to the gospel, and the gospel has glorified music. Without song the gospel would be shorn of some of its most powerful pinions, and without the inspiration of Christianity the masterpieces of Beethoven and Haydn might never have been born. Music has touched the zenith of its glory only when it has laid its noblest products on the altar of worship, and when the church ceases to sing it will be silent with the silence of death.

Song in the sanctuary, then, is not a mere esthetic embellishment, but is one of the most vital and effective parts of the service. The church has not yet found out its full power; it is one of our undeveloped resources. We want more singing and better music until the gospel has found its richest expression and the whole earth is vocal with praise.

The Whole Service

The whole service in the church should be expressive of our sense of the worth of God. The preaching, whatever its theme, is sending this forth and applying it, whether by express teaching or by implication, and the chief objective and value of preaching is to lift us into fellowship with God so as to give us a new vision of him and fresh sense of his worth and his will. The esthetic element of the service should conduce to the same end. Worship should be worthily housed and clothed. A beautiful church, appropriate in its architecture, comfortable in its appointments, and rich but tasteful in its adornments, is conducive to the worshipful spirit. And a beautiful service, orderly but chaste and reverent, accompanied with enough ritual to give symbolic expression to the mystery of religion, is also a means of grace as it strikes deep mystic chords in the soul. Beauty is born of God, all its forms and colors flash out of his heart, and his own nature is exuding through all the beauty of the world. And therefore it should not be excluded from the sanctuary, but there it should come to its most perfect and glorious flower. There is no grace in ugliness, and we should no more let secular life have all the beauty of the world than we should, in Wesley's phrase, "let the devil have all the best tunes." It is true that a beautiful service in the church can never take the place of beautiful service in the world, and a picture of Christ, wrought in rich colors in a stained glass window, can never be substituted for the image of Christ in the heart. Leonardo da Vinci swept all the golden goblets from the table of his "Last Supper" because he feared that their splendor would distract from and dim the glory of the Master, and we should be on our guard against the same subtle danger. But "let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

The truest beauty is moral and spiritual, culminating in the beauty of holiness. Sin is ugliness and spoils every form of beauty. Let the whole worship of the sanctuary express the holiness of God and be adorned with the beauty of our souls.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why should we worship?
2. How universal is worship in the world?
3. What are some means of worship?
4. Are there dangers in worship?
5. What personal good do you get from worship?

LXXXVII

WHY SHOULD WE ENGAGE IN CHRISTIAN WORK?

Worship should flow out of the church into Christian work, out of the heart into the life. Great emphasis is put all through the Scriptures and in all religious teaching on obedience and work as conditions and duties of the Christian life. Why?

For Our Own Sake

We are to engage in Christian service, first, as a means of our own life. Obedience or practice is a chief means of knowledge and skill and efficiency in all fields. It is our constant experience that we do not know anything well until we do it. Theoretical knowledge lacks clearness and certainty and efficiency until it is transformed into practical knowledge and skill. One can study music as a theory and go deep into its tonal laws and relations and yet not be able to sing a note or strike a chord. Only by long and patient practice can the musician master the instrument so that he can sweep the bow over the strings or his fingers over the keys with astonishing rapidity and accuracy and ease and pour music forth in floods from his soul.

This familiar principle applies with special force to religion. Christian truth is revealed and illustrated in the Bible, but this truth passes into our religious character and conduct and life only as we act upon it in obedience and service. Faith and faithfulness, reverence and righteousness, patience and peace, goodness and gentleness, sympathy and sacrifice, unselfishness and love, kindness and courtesy become our spirit and speech and unconscious habits only as we constantly practice them. Obedience is the great organ of spiritual knowledge. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

SALVATION A SOCIAL PROCESS

The religious life is not simply an individual gift and attainment, but it is also a social blessing. We are saved to serve, and we work out our own salvation only as we serve others. We can get it only as we give it. In this respect it is like truth and all mental and spiritual goods. Material goods are limited in quantity, and by as much as we give of our store to others we have so much less ourselves. But if one possesses a truth and imparts it to others, he does not have less truth in his own mind but more. The act of imparting it to others clears it up and deepens and intensifies it in himself. The teacher is always his own best scholar and is learning more than any other one in the class. In imparting truth it is literally more blessed to give than to receive, because the process of giving reacts upon the mind to strengthen and enrich it. So is it with faith and patience and peace, and all spiritual states: as we bestow these fine goods upon others, even upon those who may seem unworthy of them and even when we pour them forth with spendthrift carelessness and lavish prodigality, we get them back in a multiplied harvest, as the seed buried and lost in the ground returns a hundredfold. And so the paradoxical law of growth in the Christian life is: "Give, and it shall be given you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

The builder of any structure is always at the same time building himself. The builder of a house is also simultaneously constructing the fabric of his own character. If he is putting sound materials and honest workmanship into the house, he is building the same spiritual elements into his own soul; and if he is putting poor materials and dishonest work into the building, he is framing the same rotten elements into his life. And so while he is building his house, his house also is building him. As the Christian transforms others into the image of Christ for their sake he is himself transfigured into the same likeness. We are not to save others in order to be saved ourselves: any such selfish motive, however secretly hidden in the soul, would spoil the beauty and destroy the reflex blessing of such service. When we sincerely and with no thought of such return lose our lives in the service of others we get them back more perfectly wrought into the image of Christ and enriched a hundredfold.

Christian work for our own sake and also Christian work for the sake of others are thus the two oars of our boat, the two wings of our soul on which we soar into life and liberty: either without the other will not move us forward in the Christian life: both together will set us free in a larger and richer life and give the gospel free course that it may be glorified.

THE CALL TO SERVICE

We live in a needy world that calls for Christian work with a thousand tongues and the most pathetic cries. It is smitten to the heart with sin and soaked in suffering and sorrow and we can only pick our steps through its beds of pain and its sickening sights. This appeal cannot be shut out of our souls but will pierce our hearts if we have in them any measure of the Christian spirit. Jesus went about in this world doing good, touching men with healing hands, forgiving their sins and leading them into the kingdom. In this work he "goeth before," setting us an example and appointing the same work unto us. As the Father sent him into the world so has he sent us to carry on his mission and repeat his deeds. And he gave us the great promise and prophecy, "Verily, verily, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." And so the salvation of the world, in a degree, has been committed unto us. Were we to withdraw our hands from it the work would cease and the world relapse into darkness.

This is the great answer to our question, Why should we engage in Christian work? In this service we are working out our own salvation, carrying on the process of social salvation, and helping to heal the sin sick world and bring in the kingdom of God on earth. If all of us who profess and call ourselves Christians carried our worship into our work, like a mighty army would move the church of God and the gospel of Christ would prove the power of God unto salvation.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is Christian work?
2. May all our work be worship?
3. What, if any, distinction is there between things sacred and things secular?
4. What is the special value of social worship?
5. How can we improve our worship?

LXXXVIII

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL GOSPEL?

THE word "social" which has come to fill so much space in our recent religious speech and life does not appear in the Bible, but the principle itself pervades the book from Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" to the last page from the pen of Paul or John.

WHAT THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IS

The social gospel is simply the gospel as applied to all the relations and problems of society. It is the gospel out in the world endeavoring to penetrate and Christianize the whole complex life of the people in the home and school and community, in business and government and the social order. Formerly the church was little interested in these problems and was largely self-contained, concerned only with saving itself, its doctrines and polity, its orthodoxy and respectability, its members and children, but with small thought about the crowds that went surging by its doors. Conditions and problems of civic welfare, education and sanitation, work and wages, justice between social classes such as the rich and the poor, and employers and employees, the underlying principles and whole structure of the social order, only incidentally, if at all, entered into its thought and life and work. A great change has come in our day and the gospel has been released from the four walls of the church and set free and sent out as a leaven to pervade and transform and Christianize the whole community and country and world.

The Teaching of the Bible

This social gospel, however, is no modern discovery, but is simply the old gospel as taught in the Bible from the beginning to the end. Moses was emphatically a social legislator, and religion in early Israel was applied as a determinative and molding principle to society as clearly as to the individual. The later prophets of Israel were great preachers of the social gospel and no more brave and convincing and convicting applications of religion to social classes and problems have anywhere been uttered than still speak to us in thundering tones out of their books. Jesus himself was the great exponent of the social gospel, for he was out on the street in immediate contact with society with all its pressing problems, and he applied his teaching to all human conditions. He healed the sick and fed the hungry and exposed and condemned social injustice in all its forms and laid his cutting lash on scribes and Pharisees and the rulers of the city and on unjust employers and oppressors. Nowhere can we find such audacious excoriation and splendid scorn of social injustice as in his speech in the gospels. The other books of the New Testament also preach the same gospel. Paul was as fearless in this field as in any other and often handles social problems with a keen and sure touch. His letter to Philemon is a masterly illustration of the social gospel.

The Social Gospel To-day

The social gospel has now practically pervaded all our churches and pulpits. The general assemblies or councils of the Protestant denominations almost without exception have adopted platforms setting forth the principles of the social gospel and the Roman Catholic Church is not less outspoken on the same subject. These principles are embodied in the literature of the churches and are preached in their pulpits. Ministers take part in conferences and movements aiming at social betterment or solution of social injustices and evils. The old policy that it was not proper for ministers to take part in such movements and that any participation in social questions was "preaching politics," which was no business of the church, has about passed. It is now felt that it is no longer respectable for the church to stand aloof from social affairs and inclose itself within its own walls, even as much so as if physicians should keep within their medical schools and refuse to heal the sick and to advocate means of public health.

Dangers of the Social Gospel

Like every good thing, the social gospel has its dangers. It may go to excess and turn its pulpit into a platform for advocating all sorts of theories and remedies that may be socially unsound. It is apt to tend toward and become more or less obsessed or biased with socialism or some other particular social order, and this is not the business of the church. It may flood the pulpit with social preaching relating to public affairs, especially the latest sensation or crisis, such as a strike or a political campaign, that so dilutes the real gospel that there is left in it little of the true water of life. In some pulpits the people have poured out upon them on Sunday the same stream of stuff that has been discharged upon them through the hose of the newspaper during the week. This is a very thin gospel that soon satiates and may even disgust people, and they turn from it and ask for the old gospel. How to keep the social gospel within its own proper bounds and in balance "according to the proportion of our faith" may at times be a difficult problem, calling for sound judgment, but it must be done or the church may sink itself in the world it is trying to save and lose its own proper message and power.

THE SALVATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND OF SOCIETY

These two aspects of a common problem should not be set in opposition or either pushed to an extreme at the expense of the other. The salvation of the individual logically comes first, especially with the child, but the two are complementary and should work together in mutual helpfulness and harmony. Saved individuals will save society, and a saved society will help to save individuals. Saving the self is a primary condition of saving society, and saving society is a necessary and efficient means of saving the self. Either without the other is only half the gospel, a boat with one oar or a bird with one wing. Keep the two together in balanced harmony and they will work in mutual helpfulness and build that kingdom of God that is composed of saved individuals and constitutes a saved society.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Show that the social gospel runs through the Bible.
2. Why is the social gospel so important?
3. In what ways are our churches preaching and applying it?
4. What are some dangers in connection with it?
5. How may we live the social gospel?

LXXXIX

WHY IS GIVING A CHRISTIAN DUTY?

GIVING is a universal fact in all religions, and the heathen far outdo Christians in this respect. It is enjoined throughout the Scriptures, a tax of a tithe or even two tithes was exacted in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament we are enjoined to lay by us in store for this purpose "as God hath prospered us."

For the Support of the Gospel

Money is obviously needed for the support of the gospel at home and its propagation abroad. God is carrying on an immense business in establishing his kingdom in the world, a business compared with which all commercial enterprises are local and small. He must have means to pay the bills, and he calls on us to give our silver and gold, which are his anyway. There is a business side to religion as well as a religious side to business, and we should put our business honesty and promptness into our religion as well as our religious conscience and brotherhood into our business. Sometimes the church of Christ is a shame in the sight of the world, because of its unfaithfulness or laxness in properly supporting its ministers and churches and in paying its bills. The Lord has need of our money and we should pay into his treasury according to the systematic and proportional every member rule laid down by Paul (I Corinthians 16:1).

The Psychology of Giving

But the duty of giving goes much deeper than the mere commercial honesty of paying our bills. There is a close connection between wealth and worship, gold and grace. Our money is ordinarily our daily service and sacrifice crystallized into gold and silver, our lifeblood minted into coin. When we give our money to God we give him our time, our toil, our service and sacrifice, our very body and soul, and thus we are literally expressing our sense and measure of his worth to us, his cash value in our life, and are worshiping him or expressing his worthship to us. We are also giving practical expression to our sense of the worth and needs of our fellow men and of the power of the gospel to help and heal and save them.

Giving is also one of the richest means of grace in that it expands our sympathies, enlarges our vision, and enables us in a degree to lay down our life for the brethren, and thus in losing our life we are saving it. Giving saves us from selfishness and all the fountains of the heart from drying up and withering into dust. We thus learn the divine secret, which Jesus brought from heaven and which he knew as none other ever knew, that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Getting by giving, gaining by losing, addition by subtraction, this is the arithmetic of heaven and one of the paradoxical laws of the spiritual life. Great souls pour out their finest treasures upon others in lavish prodigality and thereby enlarge and enrich themselves. The gifts they send forth in streams come back to them in mist and rain that keep their lives fresh with dew and their fountains full and sweet.

Not a Mercenary Scheme

Giving, then, is not an artificial means of promoting religion, much less is it a mercenary scheme of the church for making money and keeping its coffers full. Even some Christians look on the collection as a bit of worldly business interjected into the service and introducing a jarring note, and think it would conduce to the spirituality of the worship if it were dispensed with. Sometimes we see in a church newspaper notice or placarded on the front of the church the announcement, "No Collection Will Be Taken." It is evidently a bid for attendance, an invitation to come in and it will not cost you a cent. This is an appeal to people as though they were religious beggars and is an insult to their intelligence and self-respect. If we give notice, "No Collection," we may also announce, "The Bible will not be read in this church." "Prayer will not be offered," and that no one's religious or agnostic views may be ruffled, let it be announced, "The name of God will not be mentioned." God has united getting and giving in his service, and what he has joined together let not man put asunder.

NOT SIMPLY A DUTY AND DEBT, BUT A PRIVILEGE AND DELIGHT

We commonly think of giving as a duty, that which is due or owed, and this carries with it all the unpleasant implications of a debt that might be collected by the sheriff. But we should rise above this conception and view, giving not simply as a duty and debt but as a privilege and delight. The Hebrew worshipers blew their silver trumpets as the smoke of their offerings rose from the altar, expressive of the gladness with which they rendered this sacrifice and service; and we, having passed into the dispensation of the spirit, should worship God with our offerings with even greater joy. That we with our gifts can give wings to the gospel to send it over the world, that our money extends our arm and hand so that we can reach around the globe and touch and bless every human being, is a splendid privilege that we should appreciate and that should cause us to blow our most jubilant trumpets. This power immensely widens our sphere of service and makes us benefactors of the world; it enables us to do the greater works which Jesus promised us we could do; and it broadens and enriches our life and hides it more deeply with Christ in God. It lifts us out of our little private lives and petty interests and out of the ruts of worldly routine, which shut us in and blind our vision to the great things of life, and carries us to a mountain top where we see all the kingdoms of the world, and help to make them the kingdom of our God and his Christ.

But where comes in the free grace of God if we must thus support the gospel in the world? Did not Jesus say, "Freely ye have received, freely give"? He did and verily we dare not and cannot charge anything for the grace of God in Christ. But we may and must pay for the preaching and administration of the gospel. Water, as it comes down in showers and flows in streams, is free, but we must pay something to have it brought in pipes and served to us in our homes.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Is the Old Testament tithe still binding on us?
2. Is money religious?
3. What are some ways in which a church may be financially dishonest?
4. What promises are attached to giving in Scripture?
5. How may we turn giving from a duty into a delight?

XC

HOW CAN WE IDEALIZE THE BUDGET?

The word budget is a business term that has recently come into our church finances. It implies both systematic getting of church funds and equally systematic spending of them, so that the two will balance. Yet the term, however necessary in our business affairs, is not always welcome and may give us a chill in our church life. With many people it is regarded as a burden that is paid grudgingly, if at all. What is the reason we do not like the church budget? If we can get at the root of this dislike we may remove it and turn its burden into a joy.

Why We Like to Pay for Things

We like to pay for things in proportion as we like the things. One may be enthusiastic about paying for an automobile or a radio, and with pleasure do without other things and make every sacrifice to get it, because he can visualize it, and his imagination shows him what it will do for him, and thus invests it with a halo of attractiveness and delight. Long before he gets it he can see himself with his family riding around in the car or hearing the radio, and this anticipated pleasure makes the burden of its payment light and easy. But there are other things that we do not thus visualize and seem to see no return from them, and then to pay for them becomes a heavy and a weary weight which chafes us and which we may try to escape. The proverbia difficulty of "paying for a dead horse" illustrates the point

A notable instance of such unwelcome payments are ou taxes, one of the most universally unpopular obligations i all the world. Why is this? Because we may not have th insight and take the trouble to see what we get in retur for them. Taxes pay for government, and governmen returns to us order and safety of life, liberty and property It is a great invisible hand outstretched over us day an night, protecting us and all our interests, so that we slee by night and work by day with a reasonable security in ou rights. Remove this hand and the whole social structure would quickly fall into disorder and no one's life would be safe. But because we are accustomed to the constant protection of our government we lose our sense of its presence and its value and may come to think that our taxes are simply a useless burden, if not a robbery. But if we exercise our judgment and imagination we can soon see that our taxes are a mere pittance in comparison with the protection and safety we receive for them, and that if we were deprived of this protection we would instantly be ready to pay our taxes cheerfully, though they were increased manyfold.

WHAT IS IN THE CHURCH BUDGET?

We are thus willing to pay our share of any budget when we can see something worth while in it. But the church budget too often seems to be only a bag or a box into which our money goes and out of which nothing comes of interest to us. This is verily our blindness, for if we did really visualize and idealize its contents it would gleam and blaze with light, like that "barreled sunlight" we see advertised with light bursting out of the seams of the barrel of luminous paint.

What is in that budget? More than pen and tongue can tell. Of course the church is in it with all its services; with its Bible, the greatest book in the world, and with its preaching which presents great ideas and inspiring visions that lift life up and make it worth while in joy and in sorrow, and carry us off on a gale of high thinking and worthy living. The mission boards and fields are in that budget and our schools and colleges and philanthropic institutions and enterprises. In that budget is the very gospel of the Son of God himself! Calvary and the resurrection morning are in it! Saved souls are in it, and out of it come the songs of the redeemed. A new heaven and a new earth are struggling to come to birth in that budget and all the joys of heaven are beginning to blossom in it. We are blind indeed if we cannot see in it enough to kindle our eyes and set our very souls on fire with visions that may become our victories.

That budget also lends its aid to all other budgets, to business and banking and education and government: take that budget away or empty its contents into business or pleasure and not an acre of ground or a brick or beam in a building would be worth as much. That budget helps to give order and stability, worth and motive to all other budgets. Look at it with some insight and see what it contains, let your imagination penetrate into it, so that its treasures and splendors may come out and you will be hilarious as you contribute to it.

A Possible Fallacy

Let us guard our minds against a fallacy that may be lurking in this view of the subject. A visualized and idealized budget does not mean a smaller budget or a budget that will raise itself. Genius never dispenses with work, but often means the hardest and most exacting toil. Napoleon, with all his enormous genius, said there was one thing he never spared himself and that was the most strenuous work. While his generals slept he worked far into the night. Inspiration can never dispense with perspiration. The budget is still a budget after we have spiritualized it to the fullest degree. Imagination is not simply an easy way of escaping toil, and the most buoyant disposition cannot do away with the day's work. The visualized budget ought to be a still larger budget. Under its spell we will not pay less, but more. And it will still take organization and plan and purpose, personal solicitation and patient work to get it subscribed and paid. The spiritualized budget is still business and subject to all the conditions and laws of business, but it is lifted to a higher level and kindled and irradiated with a new spirit. Then the budget will no longer be bondage but freedom and joy, its weights will become wings, and all our treasuries will overflow, the wheels of the Lord's chariot will be unloosed from the fetters of inadequate means and the clogs of debt, and the kingdom of God will come in our hearts and churches and in all the world with ever-widening sweep and power.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is a budget?
2. Why should we cheerfully pay our taxes?
3. Why are some debts specially hard to pay?
4. Why should a church have a budget?
5. How can we make it easier to pay our pledge to the church budget and yet increase it?

XCI

HOW SHALL WE USE THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY?

There is still some confusion about the name of the day. Sabbath is the Hebrew name of the seventh day of the week or Saturday and also of the institution of a rest day, and many prefer this as the name of the Christian day of rest; but the more general and increasing practice is to use for this day the name Sunday, the first day of the week which the early Christians observed as their day of rest and worship in commemoration of the resurrection of the Lord

(I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). Paul appears to hold that the Jewish Sabbath was abrogated along with the ceremonial law for Gentiles (Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:16-17). An excellent book treating this whole subject is *Sunday in the Making,* by Charles H. Huestis.

As a Rest Day

The Christian Sunday is first a day of rest from toil, and in this sense it is established in nearly all our states by civil law. The need of such rest is woven into the very physiological constitution of man and, indeed, into the constitution of the solar system with its nightly season of cessation from toil and time of sleep. Even machinery must not be driven incessantly but needs rest. Steel is subject to fatigue; much more human muscles and nerves. The need of such rest increases with the speed and pressure, complexity and competition of our modern industrialized society. Driven under such high pressure the human brain gives way and men grow old and break down before their time. But the difficulty of maintaining the rest day also increases as we cannot wholly stop our highly specialized and interrelated social machinery at a weekly interval, as in the case of much public transportation. Yet here we must maintain that machinery was made for man and not man for machinery and we must do our best by private practice and public teaching and civil law to guard and enforce the weekly rest day as a vital necessity in our life and civilization.

A Day of Meditation

A greater need for the day is that of the mind and spirit for meditation and worship. The mind needs rest and renewal as certainly as the body. Meditation consists in letting the mind quiet down and brood over the inner things of life, its ideas and ideals, its aims and motives, its convictions and courage. The rush of our life in business and pleasure and all the excitements of the madding crowd drain off these inner deeps and springs of the mind an tend to leave it shallow and feverish and fretful, withou deep roots and rich resources. The world is too much wit us and sooner or later wastes our finest powers and ma leave us bankrupt of the worthiest goods of life. We nee at intervals to sit down alone with ourselves and feel ou pulse and look ourselves in the face and see what manne of persons we are. Some are afraid to be alone, and left t themselves are instantly restless and miserable. They are always craving a crowd and itching for a new thrill. One safeguard against this shallow life and unhappy fate is found in the Christian Sunday as a day of quiet thinking and reflection, reading and meditation. The best literature of the spirit should be drawn upon to feed the deep springs of life and fellowship with the best minds of the ages should reinvigorate us. For this purpose, simply as a book of human literature, the Bible is a matchless storehouse of spiritual treasure that will minister to our sanity and serenity, conscience and courage, inner strength for outer service in the midst of our hurrying and often heedless life.

A Day of Worship

But it is as a day of worship that the Christian Sunday meets us at the summit and highest needs of our life. All our faculties and activities, needs and aspirations run up to God for their satisfaction and enrichment, as all flowers look up to the sun and the whole landscape bares its breast to the ministry of the sky or withers into a desert. Man without God is a pitiful fragment, work without worship has no worthy aim and meaning. Worship, which is only another spelling of worthship, expresses our sense of the worth of God, the sum and infinite enlargement and enrichment of all our human worths. In the house of worship our religious yearnings and needs are brought to their highest and purest expression, and by its helpful and inspiring messages, its prayer and praise, and in the mystic contagion of its atmosphere and by the haunting beauty of its symbolism we are uplifted and purified and strengthened for all our work. Jesus himself went to church "as his custom was," and the whole current and spirit of worship that flows through the Bible in such magnificent expression pours into our Christian Sunday and makes it a day of healing and wholeness to our spirits.

THE SPIRIT OF THE DAY

Difficulties and dangers have always attended this day. The Pharisees turned it into a burden and ruined it, and our Puritan forefathers in their reaction against evils in their day also went to an extreme in emptying the day of its rightful liberty and joy and overloaded it with restrictions and gloom. This in many instances made it unwelcome and hateful to children, so that they were sorry to see it come as a shadow flung over their lives and glad to see it go. We must try to correct any such spirit without going to an opposite and even more hurtful extreme in secularizing the day. It should be a day of gladness in the home and of innocent and wholesome liberty of life. But very insidious and powerful enemies are ever pressing against its bulwarks. Business and especially commercialized amusements are ever seeking to make inroads upon it and conquer it bit by bit. The open theater and the crowded ball field level the day and empty it of wholesome quiet and rest. Church members may turn it into a day of pleasure touring and social engagements that leave little of it for worship and even less for spiritual improvement.

How to draw the line around the day, so as to safeguard its spiritual values may not be easy, but we would better err on the safe side of conservatism rather than of undue liberty and laxity. If we have in us the real spirit of the Lord we shall not find it burdensome or difficult to keep and rightly use the Lord's day itself. If we surrender this day we sweep away one of the bulwarks of our rest and worship and one of the strong defenses of our Christian civilization.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. In what sense is the Fourth Commandment binding on u
2. How did the Pharisees treat the day?
3. What trouble did Jesus have with them about this day?
4. How can we meet the dangers that beset it to-day?
5. Give some practical ways in which we can improve the u of it?

XCII

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD AMUSEMENTS

This is another complex and difficult question which can only be touched on in the most general way in this connection. But it is one of enormous magnitude and Christian concern and cannot be evaded or ignored by the church. A comprehensive and sane recent book on the subject is *Popular Amusements,* by L. R., J. E., and D. M. Phipps.

A Pleasure-seeking Age

Ancient Rome went mad with its Colosseum and Theater, and its cry for "Bread and the Circus" was one cause that sent it to its doom. Our age may not have yet caught up with Rome, but it is approaching its speed. "Amusement mad" describes it. Sports and games are the rage and flood the newspapers. "Thirty-thousand attend the Yale-Princeton football games, and three hundred attend the Yale-Princeton debate!" Churches are languishing, with new theaters going up, often crowded with a waiting line outside. The moving and talking picture, inventions of yesterday, are now our fourth industry, and the screen draws an attendance of twelve million people daily and about forty million see every film that is released. Dancing and cards often aided in their excitement with wine and stronger drink have their unnumbered devotees. Everywhere crowds,

crowds, all on pleasure bent, craving excitement, seeking a keener thrill. "The people of this country are spending every year for amusements more than they pay for their schools and three times as much as they pay for their churches! Where is this going to stop? Is sport going to displace religion?" We do not think so, but it is well to note early any such signs and symptoms.

Extremes to Be Avoided

Such an extreme runs into social danger and ruin and must be brought under control, but the opposite extreme of restriction to the point of suppression and prohibition must be equally avoided. Amusement or a pleasurable diversion from the daily toil and monotony of life, especially from the speed and nervous wear and tear of our high-pressure civilization, is a necessary condition and means of rest and relief and health and happiness. Extreme reaction against all amusement has been tried with disastrous results. John Calvin swept theaters, card playing and dancing out of Geneva in 1546 and went far toward suppressing all amusement, and thereby incurred unpopularity for his church and government and flung shadows of gloom over Puritanism that lingered in New England down to our own day. All attempts to suppress relaxation and recreation, play and pleasure is only attempting to dam up essential springs in human nature that will accumulate restlessness and rebellion that will break forth in the opposite extreme. The church at times has tried this policy with unfavorable results. Neither extreme is healthy and can be maintained, and the golden mean should rule.

Dangerous Forms of Amusement

There are forms of amusement that are popular and yet are attended with grave danger. The church has always been at odds with the theater and has good reason for its attitude of suspicion and antagonism. The stage has been so notoriously unclean that it could not receive other than condemnation from the church. Yet it is going too f to condemn it wholesale, for the dramatic instinct is co stitutional in human nature and the stage may be a powe ful means of education as well as of entertainment. Th moving and talking picture is an enormous extension of th theater and is capable of doing infinite harm. It cannot b put under universal ban, and attempts have been made t censor it and even to enlist churchmen to guard it from th worst abuses. The problem remains only partially solved Dancing has ever been a dangerous amusement, combining music and motion in a subtle sex appeal, and where to draw the line against it has always been a difficult problem. Th church in all its communions has tried to advise and legislate and guard against these pervasive and powerful dangerous forms of amusement, but it has ever encountered the difficulty of drawing the line between permission and prohibition.

The Positive Duty of the Church

The church must take a positive and not simply a negative attitude toward amusements. Too often it has simply suppressed without endeavoring to express this instinct and vital need. It has forbidden prevailing amusements without putting some better thing in their place. It has enjoined external rules and restrictive regulations without furnishing inner principles and outer means of liberty and joy. It should seek to educate this desire and provide pure and healthful means of satisfying it. It should implant and cultivate a spirit that will pervade all life and safeguard it, and solve these dangerous problems. Our amusements should not be wasteful of health or time or money and should not be unfriendly to our higher mental and spiritual interests. They should be a means and not an end, a servant and not a master. The home itself should be a center of enjoyment, and the school and church means of liberty and life. The opportunities and means of such life are boundless if we have a spirit in affinity with them. Nature and books and friendship, play and healthful pleasures, who that knows these craves morbid excitement that is an intoxicant feeding its own craving with a deeper thirst and burning out the capacity for real satisfaction?

The Christian attitude and safeguard is the spirit of Christ in us. Having on the whole armor of God will make us proof against all these fiery darts. We are to be in the world and yet not let the world be in us, as the boat is in the sea but not the sea in the boat. This ideal may be difficult, but it is the real solution of this problem and of all our problems and is the victory that overcometh the world.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is the meaning of the word amusement?
2. Is the Bible hostile or friendly to rightful amusements?
3. Is our growing wealth one source of dangerous amusements?
4. Are our young people increasingly indulging in questionable pleasures?
5. What are your amusements?

XCIII

IS CHRISTIANITY DECLINING?

This is an ominous question to confront us after Christianity has been in the world nineteen hundred years. If after this ample trial it has passed the peak of its success and is on the downward slope its outlook is discouraging. Some even loudly affirm that it is already dead and only its corpse is cumbering the ground and should be decently and speedily buried.

However, it often turns out that things are not as bad as they look and it is not in the nature and history of Christianity to become discouraged. Too many heroes and martyrs emblazon its pages with their "gold stars" to permit this. It has passed through dark periods and bloody persecutions that have tried Christian men's souls, but still it lives and is full of life and hope.

Discouraging Conditions

It must be admitted that in recent years Christianity has been facing unusual untoward circumstances. The World War stirred up the deeps of the world and, like a submarine unheaval, brought to the surface from the abyss strange and fearsome monsters. It everywhere in a measure unloosed the joints of the world and filled men's hearts with new fears. Christianity was even blamed for the war, at least for not preventing it, and some degree of responsibility does rest upon it for this great failure and collapse of our Christian civilization. Yet this charge is more fallacious than sound. The physician is not to be blamed for the disease he comes to cure or the hospital for the patients in its beds.

It is further true that since the war there has been an outbreak of irreligion such as the world has not seen for a century and more. Atheistic Russia is endeavoring to eradicate the last germ of religion from its vast melting pot and is thundering its godless propaganda through the world with no small effect, so that some Christians are on the point of panic and ready to exclaim, "We be all dead men."

In Europe and America also skepticism has become far more open in its hostility to Christianity and is receiving the support of men eminent in science and literature. Men of literary light and leading have free access to our popular magazines and the front page of the newspaper and the center of the lecture platform, and even entrance to Christian colleges and are captivating many. Atheism has also become organized in our country with a complete cult and equipment, with its creed and preachers and even foreign missionaries, and has become a veritable religion with no God as its God and halls and assemblies and officers as its churches and congregations.

All this startles us, although the same condition existed in France and Europe and even in this country in a degree a century and a half ago. But such new movements are likely to be more enthusiastic and noisy than older movements whose effervescence has quieted down into settled processes. Christianity has long since learned that silent forces are ever the mightiest and the still small voice more pervasive and potent than earthquake and fire.

It is a good thing that new trials have come upon Christianity "in these last days," for this will force it to face the new conditions and forge its weapons to meet the new opposition. It must meet the intellectuals with keener intellect, their scoffs with scholarship, their wit with wisdom, and the self-expression and unrestraint of the behaviorists with sound psychology and a more wholesome ethics.

A Longer Look

The cure for troubled thought is always more thought, of a short look is a longer vision. A single mile of the atmosphere may look colorless when fifty miles of it may be tinted with heavenly blue. Christianity has a long record and can put up an impressive mass of evidence. Statistics may be deceptive, and yet they establish some things in the large. In our country Christian membership in our churches has grown five times faster than the population. One hundred years ago there was one professing Christian in every fifteen of the population, and now there is one in every three, and, excluding children, one in every two. In the world at large the results are not less encouraging. In 1500 A.D. there were 100,000,000 nominal Christians in the world; in 1800 there were 200,000,000, and it is estimated by careful calculation that of a total world population of 1,646,491,000 there are now 565,510,000 nominal Christians, or about one-third of the population of the globe. Even with the emphasis on nominal as contrasted with genuine Christians, these figures are impressive. Christianity has grown more in the last hundred years than in the preceding eighteen hundred years. What a commentary on the boasted prediction of Voltaire, uttered in 1760: "Ere the beginning of the nineteenth century Christianity will have disappeared from the earth," and of another famous skeptic that it had taken twelve men to establish Christianity but he would show the world that one man could destroy it.

DEEPER SIGNS OF PROGRESS

A deeper and more significant sign of progress is that Christianity itself is growing more Christian. It has cast off many of the old rags of superstition and unsound doctrine and clothed itself in the robes of reason. It has disowned dogmatic authority and proclaimed the right and liberty of private judgment. It is studying the Bible so as to understand its origin and development and spiritual teaching. And above all the central fact of Christianity is now Christ himself. His kingdom as the rule of his spirit in the lives of men is becoming a Christianized brotherhood. Religion is being profoundly studied and enriched from many fields and is becoming spiritual and social and vital. Mutual dissensions among the churches are ceasing, wasteful divisions are being healed, and the church is beginning to march "like a mighty army."

Christianity is not on the decline, it is full of the spirit of youthfulness and faith and courage, and to-day it is more Christlike in spirit and service and self-sacrifice than it ever has been in the past.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Are there eddies in the stream of all progress?
2. What are some present conditions in Christianity that seem discouraging to you?
3. Should we prohibit atheism by law?
4. What are encouraging conditions in Christianity to-day?
5. What effect should anti-Christian conditions and forces have on us?

XCIV

ARE FOREIGN MISSIONS A SPENT FORCE?

THIS is another ominous question in the same line as the one relating to a declining Christianity that we must face. If foreign missions are a spent force, then Christianity itself is on the wane, for Christianity is by birth and nature a foreign missionary religion and its field is the world. We must always face facts and the facts we want and will have.

DISQUIETING FACTS ABROAD

There are disquieting facts in foreign missionary work both abroad and at home. Abroad, foreign missions were disturbed along with all things else by the aftermath of the World War. In China, especially, the upheaval of government and the social chaos bore heavily on Christian missions in that country, and the outbreak of 1927 drove many missionaries from their posts and threw the work into much confusion. But this was temporary, and normal conditions are being slowly restored.

Various reports and reasons hostile to the foreign missionary work have been spread abroad by those who are unfriendly to Christianity itself. It is charged that we have no right to force our religion on foreigners with the result that we only distract them and do them more harm than good. It is declared, for example, that "what is happening in China to-day is the vast expression of a whole great nation's revolt against our offer of help or service, and that China is nothing but one mass of anti-foreign and anti-Christian repugnance." To this Dr. Robert E. Speer, who knows China intimately by repeated visits to it, flatly answers, "We do not believe it." And his book on *Are Foreign Missions Done For?* is packed with facts and testimonies on this whole subject that are convincing. He gives pages of testimonies from publicists, editors and other leading men in foreign countries, many of them non-Christians, bearing testimony to the success and worth of foreign missions. We quote only one: Professor Edward A. Ross, of the department of economics, University of Wisconsin, says: "I am not a member of any church, but I have visited every inhabited land in the world, and everywhere I find Christian missionaries educating people, bringing to them the blessings of modern medicine and sanitation, sweeping away their destructive and obstructive superstitions, saving their minds and their bodies and giving them wholesome social attitude, whether they save their souls or not. I am strong for the foreign missionary."

DISCONCERTING CONDITIONS AT HOME

Perhaps more serious still are some disconcerting conditions at home. The editor of the *Missionary Review of the World,* published in New York, in the January number, 1930, sent out a question to representative pastors and foreign missionary officers stating that "surveys of eleven denominations show that the contributions have been steadily falling off since the peak year of 1921," and asking them to give their reasons for this decline and what remedy they would suggest. Twenty answers were received and are published in the April number of the same review. They practically agree that there is such a decline and ascribe it to increasing secularization of our American life, to hostile propaganda against foreign missions based on misstated or misunderstood conditions abroad, to the merging of all appeals in a common budget, and other like causes, and yet they show no discouragement but urge "a re-emphasis of the missionary motive as inherent in the Christian religion." A hopeful fact in connection with these questions and answers is that there is no disposition to deny or belittle discouraging conditions in this work, but there is a determination to face them frankly and seek their true cause and cure. Dr. Speer's book, already referred to, and a similar volume entitled *Foreign Missions Under Fire*, by C. H. Patton, are full of fair answers to all such questions and are a repertory of facts and arguments on the whole subject.

A Broad View

Again we turn from a narrow view of present conditions to a broad view of the whole subject. Christ himself came as a foreign missionary to this world, and Christianity was born with a tremendous foreign missionary urge in its heart. Every book in the New Testament was written by a foreign missionary, and Christianity at once burst the barriers of its birth and native bounds and launched out upon the deeps of the Gentile world and set sail on its worldwide adventure and march. All down through the centuries it has followed this lure and the foreign missionary has planted the sign of the cross on every shore. This work to-day has grown to proportions that need to be better known to those whose Christian faith has grown faint or whose unfriendly attitude has grown hostile. The latest issue of the *World Missionary Atlas* shows that "throughout the non-Christian world of today 29,188 foreign missionaries and 151,735 native workers are conducting Christian work in 4,598 stations and 50,513 outstations; 32,246 churches with 5,614,154 communicants shine like stars amid the darkness of the non-Christian world. Adherents swell the number of the Christian community to 85,342,378, and an uncounted host stands upon the threshold of the Kingdom; 2,440,148 pupils are being educated in 50,079 missionary schools ranging from kindergartens to universities; 858 hospitals and 1,686 dispensaries treated in a recent year 4,788,258 patients. The Bible is being distributed in 853 languages and dialects at the rate of over 11,000,000 a year. For this vast and varied work the churches of Europe and America in a recent year gave $69,555,148." One outstanding fact in connection with this impressive work is that foreign missionaries themselves are never discouraged but stand at the front with brave hearts and optimistic faith and courage. It is, as a rule, only well-fed and ease-loving people at home that find fault with and fire into these front lines from behind their backs.

Foreign missions have their fluctuating tides along with all things human. But they are not declining. Whatever the present wavering at some points, the line stands unshaken and is ever pressing forward in the faith and vigor of final victory.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Is it strange that Christianity both at home and abroad has shared in the disturbing conditions following the Great War?
2. Why is Christianity a foreign missionary religion?
3. What are some of the chief obstacles to foreign missions at home?
4. What are some of the chief obstacles to foreign missions abroad?
5. What you do you think and what are you doing about foreign missions?

XCV

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER RELIGIONS?

OUR fathers generally thought that heathen religions were willful wickedness and works of the devil that should be utterly rooted up and exterminated. But a climatic change has come over this view and it is now generally held that pagan faiths are broken lights of God and dim gropings after him if haply he may be found. It was the foreign missionaries themselves who first saw the error of the old view and corrected it. They met with many instances of sincere faith and self-evident piety in heathen worshipers and could not but see and acknowledge the presence of the Spirit of God in such souls. This view is now held by practically all foreign missionaries and they do not regard and treat pagan faiths as works of the devil but as the universal religious nature of man working according to its best lights. So they do not set about destroying this faith, but seek to enlighten it and enlist it in the service of their larger and truer Christian faith and life.

Attitude of the Bible

It is remarkable how often when we find out a new and larger view of Christian truth that we discover it was in the Bible all along. The Old Testament, while in general it breathed a narrow spirit of Jewish provincialism toward other nations, yet contains many glimpses and promises of divine blessing including "all nations." In the New Testament this broader spirit grows clearer still. Jesus said little or nothing about heathen faiths, but on one occasion he looked out over the world and wistfully said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," and declared, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." The only religionists he fell out with and excoriated were men of his own faith and church, doctors of divinity, scribes and Pharisees.

Paul at Athens

The classical example of the Christian attitude toward other religions is that of Paul on Mars Hill at Athens. In that university center as he was on his way up the court where he was to speak his eye fell on an altar with an idol containing the inscription, "To an Unknown God." Seeing a good text which was in itself a stroke of genius, Paul instantly seized that idol and, so to speak, took it along with him and used it as his text. "Ye men of Athens," he began, "in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you." That was a good introduction and masterly psychology. He did not smash that idol to fragments as a piece of superstition and a work of Satan which they were guiltily worshiping; on the contrary he treated it with entire respect. He took that poor dumb idol and used it as a stepping-stone up into larger light and truth. He used that idol as far as it was good, as it contained some religious truth and dim reaching after God, and with it as a flickering torch he led his hearers up into the light of the living God! That was sound logic and persuasive preaching. It put him in pleasant relations with his hearers and won their attention. And so Paul took a heathen religion and accepted it as so much common ground on which he stood with these pagan philosophers and then led them on to broader and truer ground.

This is the attitude our foreign missionaries now take toward all heathen religions. They do not begin by denouncing them, but by adopting them so far as they contain elementary religious truth and incorporating this in their own teaching. And so in our contact with other religions, however far off they may be from our faith, it is not good psychology or good Scripture to begin by seeking to destroy them, but it is better to pick out the good in them and use this as a stepping-stone or torch up into the larger light and truer faith of our own religion.

A Still Further Application

This principle admits of a still further application nearer home. We are in contact with many forms of religion in our own country and community that widely differ from ours. The religious notices in the Saturday newspapers contain announcements of all sorts of strange cults, some of which are as superstitious to us as any heathen worship. We have in this country a veritable "confusion of tongues" in more than a hundred of these aberrant cults and they are nearly all of American invention and manufacture. Yet there is almost without exception some common ground under their feet and ours, at least a theistic faith, and we should take our stand on this and go with them as far as we can in terms of respect and then endeavor to lead on to larger ground. At least we should maintain neighborly relations with them of good will and common decency. Just now in Russia there is a union of Christians, Jews and Mohammedans in a "Society for the Protection of Brotherly Love" which is endeavoring to take a common stand against the Soviet attempt to exterminate all religion, and this a right and good movement.

Much more should this principle and spirit apply to our relations with other Christian denominations. Formerly these relations were divisive lines of friction that often became inflamed with heated controversies and mutual recriminations. Even yet there are super-orthodox leaders who decry pleasant relations with other Christians differing from them and denounce them as holding "another religion" and being "worse than infidels." This spirit is no longer respectable and we have left it behind as belonging to a mediæval age.

All this is not saying or implying that there are no vital differences between our Christian faith and other faiths. There are times when we should "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Yet we are to seek the wise way of taking hold of every such situation and always speak the truth in love and seek brotherly relations with all men.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Is there some truth in the grossest error in any field?
2. Did Paul on any other occasion than at Athens recognize the presence of God in pagan worship?
3. Why are foreign missionaries, knowing the worst about heathen religions, more kindly disposed toward them than we are at home?
4. What is the best approach toward all errors in religion?
5. Why should we send the gospel to pagans at all?

XCVI

HAS SKEPTICISM CAPTURED OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES?

This is sometimes alleged and if it were true it would be a most ominous fact. Our colleges and universities are fountains of ideas, and ideas in the long run rule character and conduct. The question is a large and complex one and can only be touched on in the space of this answer. A recent book discussing the matter in all its facts and phases is *Religion in the American College,* by Edward Sterling Boyer, of Dakota Wesleyan University. The outcome of the investigations and discussions in this book is encouraging.

Disquieting Conditions

We need not be surprised that there are disquieting conditions in our schools and colleges, for we meet with these everywhere. We are told that organized atheism has invaded and is finding unexpected reception in these institutions with atheist clubs, sometimes calling themselves blasphemous names. Reports also are heard of professors that go outside of their fields to attack or cast aspersions upon religion. It is commonly believed that many students from Christian homes come back from these institutions with their faith undermined. Questionnaires have been taken with unfavorable results, although this means of investigation is notoriously unreliable. Professor R. M. Bingle, sociologist of the University of New York, recently made a survey of 432 students in his department, with the result that 76 per cent of them believed in some kind of Deity, 24 per cent disbelieved in any kind, and only 25 per cent declared a positive belief in immortality. It turned out, however, that most of the students that had lost their faith had done so before entering college.

MORE FAVORABLE FACTS

A long comparative view is corrective of these disquieting conditions. At the close of the eighteenth century the religious life in American colleges was at far lower levels. In Princeton from 1778 to 1782 there was only one professor of religion, and in Bowdoin College in 1807 there was only one Christian. At Yale for four years there was only one, and Bishop Meade, of Virginia, said in 1811 that William and Mary College was a hotbed of French infidelity. Many of these students at this time assumed the names of notorious infidels and atheists. Compare with these figures the result of a census of 80 state institutions in 1921: out of a total of 152,461 students, 130,486 had religious affiliations, about 80 per cent of them were communicants in Christian churches, and only 21,675 made no statement of their religious life. Of the 800 colleges and universities in the country the large majority of both the faculty and the student body are Christian in faith. These "atheist clubs" are only a mild recrudescence and breaking out of a youthful rash that was so virulent in the colleges a hundred years and more ago.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A pronounced change has come over the field of higher education within the last generation. Formerly only church colleges were religious and they did not teach religion but they required attendance at daily chapel services; and at first the state universities, being tax-supported, did not recognize, much less teach, religion at all, and they were then regarded as "godless." Both the churches and the state universities themselves soon discovered that this was an untenable position and began to open the way for religious recognition and teaching. At first the various denominations began to place student pastors with parish houses on the campuses of the universities, and thus they sought to minister to the students of their own faith, and this plan is still widely and successfully in operation. But now practically all the state universities have religious courses in their curricula with professors to teach them. "There are 172 higher institutions in the United States in which courses in religious education are being taught. Sixty-five of the departments in which there is such instruction are called Religious Education Departments. In the 107 other institutions the name was connected with Bible, education, religion, and sociology. Seventeen of the 172 colleges give majors specifically in religious education."

Various methods of dealing with sectarianism are used. "The union type is represented at the University of Iowa, where the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish forces are joined with the university in presenting religious instruction." The courses in religion, which are an official part of the curricula and receive their due credits, have been attracting increasing numbers and such institutions as Columbia University, with its more than 20,000 students, are now great centers of religious education.

The program of religious education in our colleges and universities is yet in a tentative stage and is being gradually worked out, but religion is no longer treated as a stranger or interloper but is recognized as one of the great human interests that calls for the most serious study. Infidelity on the university campus is apt to be more noisy and get more advertising than such study, but religious faith, quieter and deeper, is there coming to its own.

The Spirit of Youth

The problem of the religion of students in our colleges and universities is part of the youth movement of our day which is supposed to be relaxing their religious views and morals into dangerous looseness. Some tendency in this direction is to be expected as a reaction against the undue restrictions to which they were subjected in former times when their religious creed and moral standards and social customs were rigidly prescribed for them and imposed upon them. They are now granted larger liberty in determining their views and practices, and this is to the good, provided it is not run into that self-expression which easily becomes license. Those who are in wide touch with our youth believe there is little ground for alarm and that our young people are true to the "faith of our fathers" in its broad principles and loyalties. The young people in all our churches have arrived on the field of religious interest and activity in enormous numbers compared with former days, and we have good reason to believe that they will prove true to religious idealism and duty.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is the best way of dealing with religious skepticism in young people?
2. May Christian parents and the churches themselves be in some degree responsible for the reaction of young people against religion?
3. What aspects of religion should be specially presented to youth?
4. Ought skeptical college and university professors to sow religious doubts in the minds of their students?
5. Do you have any personal knowledge of religious conditions in our institutions of learning?

XCVII

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Religion and education are vitally related and mutually necessary: they both aim at fullgrown personality, but either without the other may be the blind leading the blind into the ditch of one-sided development and ruinous results. Unenlightened religion may be a dangerous fanaticism, and godless education may be a social menace. The two should go hand in hand as mutual guides and helpers.

The Need of Religious Education To-day

Never was the need of religious education more urgent than it is to-day. Godless education multiplies and intensifies every one of the dangers of our modern world. Education is a powerful tool which a bad man uses as destructively as a good man can use it constructively. Science invents magic machines, but some of them look like the devices of the devil. It was science that made the last war such an unprecedented slaughter and will make the next one ten times more so. Education may be a savor of death unto death as well as of life unto life. Science has also turned the whole world into an arena in which we see and hear all things of importance and countless things of no importance. It has crowded our consciousness with the big, buzzing, booming world of sensation and excitement, and all this has whipped up our bodily life to a high pitch of activity and intensity. It has whetted all our appetites to a keener craving and a sharper edge. It has turned life into a continuous moving picture set to jazz music. It has made the peculiar temptations of youth more pervasive and rampant, fascinating and seductive. The loosening effects of the World War are registering themselves in the "youth movement," "the revolt of youth," "flaming youth," and other alluring movements and slogans which are not altogether downward but are often dangerous in tendency, especially when not informed and guided and restrained by religious light and leading. Without becoming pessimistic and alarmist over the present condition of our youth, yet there is enough going on to make us solicitous for their welfare and to urge us to use every means for safeguarding and promoting it.

The Church and School

The church and school must awaken to these dangers. The church has always been the mother of education and in the Dark Ages kept the torch of learning dimly burning in its monasteries. Yet modern religious education has not kept pace with secular education. The colleges and universities themselves give signs of awakening and sounding notes of alarm. The church is beginning to stir itself to this need and call of the day. All our churches are now studying the problem and are organizing and conducting departments of religious education. Presently and none too soon will the church hear this call to a much larger and more efficient system. We must train our children in their plastic years before they leave us and send them forth from our homes so grounded in Christian truth and life that they will maintain their Christian faith while in the college, adapting their old faith to their new knowledge, and then they will come back from college with their faith, not destroyed or devitalized, but strengthened and enlarged by the wider knowledge and more wonderful world and richer life into which they have been introduced. This has been and is being done in many homes and churches in accordance with the truest educational and religious methods of teaching.

Means of Religious Education

The Sunday school has been the main means of religious education by the church. It has often been depreciated and pronounced poor and almost worthless, and it is true enough that it has been imperfect and inefficient. But then it is only about a hundred and fifty years since it was started in an informal and sporadic way, and it took another quarter of a century for it to find its feet in an organized form. The day school was also very inefficient during its early years, with little or no preparation on the part of its teachers, with uninviting textbooks and unpedagogical methods and general lack of discipline. However, the Sunday school through its century and a half of work has been doing immense good in its field and is giving many signs of improvement.

One reason for its inefficiency is that while it was the child of the church yet at first the mother gave little attention to it and, like Topsy, it "just growed." In fact, it is only in recent years that the church is waking up to the foundational importance of the Sunday school and is taking it seriously. The Sunday school is not an outworn and decadent institution, but is only coming into its birthright and its best days are yet to be. The teachers must be trained for their work in sound pedagogical methods, and this probably means paid teachers and a sufficient budget to supply and support all modern means and methods.

Daily Vacation and Week-Day Church Schools

The Sunday school with its half-hour of instruction in the Bible once a week has woefully insufficient time for any worthy religious education, and this school is now being supplemented by daily vacation and week-day church schools in many places. The movement is as yet in its tentative stages, but it is working promisingly and yielding good results. There are also schools of religious education in which workers are trained, and many churches are now employing directors of religious education to organize and correlate all their work in this field. Teacher training classes are also held in many churches, in which teachers are prepared for their work. There is growing up a large body of literature in this field with journals devoted to the work and there is "The International Council of Religious Education" and also "The Religious Education Association," both of which publish journals.

Means and methods in this field are multiplying, and it is important that this work does not become overloaded with machinery, but is kept filled and vitalized with the spirit.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Are religion and education ever in mutual antagonism?
2. Where lies the fault when such a condition arises?
3. What is right with our Sunday schools?
4. What is wrong with them?
5. What are you doing to improve your Sunday school?
6. Are you conducting any daily vacation or week-day church school?

XCVIII

WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK FOR CHURCH UNION?

THE divisions that have separated our common Christianity down through the centuries into so many churches, that have often been rivals and even enemies, have been and still are one of its greatest weaknesses and at times have been its scandal. All the many churches deplore this wasteful and often warring division and from time to time efforts are made and frequently with some degree of success to heal it into a united Christianity.

Church Union but Not Church Unity

By church union is usually meant the uniting of Christians into a common fellowship or brotherhood that can eliminate waste and unfriendliness while conserving some separate organizations. Few if any dream of one universal church organization any more than we can dream of fusing all nations into one worldwide nation. When Jesus prayed for his followers "that they all may be one," we are not to suppose that he referred to one church government but rather to a spiritual unity of fellowship such as existed between him and the Father, "even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." Jesus also referred to other folds than the Jewish one, and this negatived the idea of one church government. In the Middle Ages all western Christendom was comprised under one government, but never was the church so despotic and unspiritual and corrupt as in that time. We may have church union that will abolish many of our separate churches along with their evils, but unity belongs only to the kingdom of God.

Wastefulness and Other Evils of Our Churches

The evils connected with our many churches are acknowledged on all sides, but the problem of dealing with them is difficult and often seems insoluble. In many of our small towns with only a thousand or so people there may be eight or ten churches. Only one strong and fruitful church could be supported, but these rival churches consume their financial ability if not their spiritual power simply in maintaining their life at "a poor dying rate." Formerly there was the much deeper evil and greater scandal of their opposing and even fighting each other in their teaching and work, but this evil has largely passed away and is no longer respectable. This wasteful division goes out into our mission fields where it becomes as ridiculous as it is scandalous.

However, the evil of these conditions has been telling on the business sense and the conscience of our churches and increasing efforts are being made to cure the trouble. In many communities two or more denominational churches are federated into community churches under various working arrangements, and this sometimes gives some relief. Economic pressure is driving these competitive churches under a common roof. Unions are also being effected in denominational families. The Presbyterians have united in Scotland and negotiations are now under way to effect this end among the Presbyterian and Reformed churches in this country. Still larger unions are being advocated. The Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians have united to form the United Church of Canada, and this is a notable achievement. If we could unify each historic Protestant church family, such as the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and others, this would probably be as far as we could go in this generation. We also now have the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America which includes in its membership about thirty-three denominations, and this is a long step towards Protestant fellowship and coöperation. Much progress has thus been made, a new spirit is growing up amongst all our churches, even Roman Catholics and Protestants are getting into better mutual relations, and the outlook is encouraging.

How Jesus Handled a Church Sectarian Problem

Jesus ran into this very problem of sectarianism in his conversation with the Samaritan woman. When he was driving her into a close corner, she thought it was time to change the subject and sprung on him the question of the Jewish and Samaritan temples. These were rival denominations of the same general religion, and she put to him the question of which was the true one. Possibly she hoped he would put his approval on the Samaritan temple, and it might have been thought that Jesus, being a loyal Jew, would have said that Jerusalem was the only true altar. But what did he do? He did not decide that one of them was right and the other wrong, but he boldly pushed both aside by a broader principle that comprehended them both. "Woman," he said, "believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father . . . but the hour cometh when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth"; no matter about the place and the name. So he swept both of these rival temples off their mountain tops as exclusive places of worship with a broader principle. He lifted the material form into the spiritual reality, dissolving mountains and temples, denominational names and places into the soul of religion and the spirit of worship.

When did one denomination ever convince another that it was right and the other wrong so that the second body gave up and came over into the conquering camp? It is not in the constitution of human nature to do this thing and it cannot be brought about by theological argument. Efforts at union based on such ground invariably result in stiffening each side in its own position and perhaps driving a wedge deeper than ever between them. But when two or more denominations can give up their point of view that one is right and the other wrong and when both will move forward to a broader ground and higher outlook of vision that comprehends both views in the kingdom of God, then they may coalesce as two contiguous drops of water blend without friction into smooth and permanent union. This day is dawning in some quarters, and we should work and pray that it may speedily come.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Were the early Christian churches formed into one organization?
2. What would be the objection and difficulty to one world wide national government, and would the same difficulties arise in one world wide church?
3. What are dangers in connection with denominational churches?
4. Can we largely remove these dangers without abolishing the churches?
5 What is your attitude and feeling toward other denominations?

XCIX

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN IMMORTALITY?

IN believing in immortality we do not profess to know the nature of the life beyond. We affirm no more than survival of identical personality, but the nature of that life is unimaginable by us because it lies beyond our earthly experience and it is not necessary that we should have concrete knowledge of it, nor is it wise to speculate about it. It belongs to the spiritual and eternal world into which we have not yet entered. The great hope itself is enough.

NO SUFFICIENT REASON AGAINST IT

There is no sufficient reason for not believing in the immortal life. The chief argument against it is that we know mental life only in connection with the brain and that the destruction of this organ raises a presumption that the mind is destroyed with it. The brain, however, is being partially destroyed every moment, and yet consciousness survives. It may be that death is only a supreme instance of this process in which the soul finally casts off the physical body for some other and finer organism. Paul speaks of being unclothed of our mortality and clothed upon with immortality, and modern science, instead of denying this possibility, points in the same direction.

A Universal Instinctive Belief

The universal instinctive belief of the human soul in immortality is a massive fact. Men of every age and rank have cherished this belief. Savages in their forests and scholars in their libraries; the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphics carved in granite and the latest printed page; Socrates drinking his hemlock, Plato penning his dialogues and Shakespeare writing his tragedies; peasant and poet, imaginative artist and cold logical scientist, pagan and Christian, all bear witness to this fact. Growth in knowledge, even in physical science, does not destroy it; rather it grows with all our growth. It is at least a product of evolution. Has this universal faith been produced simply to be frustrated? Has evolution ground a lie out of the cosmic process? It is more reasonable to believe that this is an honest world and that this great belief has flowered out of its heart and is rooted in reality.

Incompleteness of the Soul and World

The incompleteness of the soul in this world and of the world itself points to another world. Human faculties never reach their full development and satisfaction in this life, but they merely catch glimpses of truth and the most powerfully developed intellect is only getting ready for work. The heart craves affection and never more passionately than at the edge of the grave. If death ends all, mind and heart are never allowed to blossom and bear their full fruit but are false prophecies. But we believe this is an honest world and that all its faculties shall be satisfied. The moral incompleteness of the world leads to the same conclusion. If there is no other world to requite the injustices of this world, then this world is emptied of moral reality, and conscience has told more lies than it has ever told truth.

The Fatherhood of God

The deepest ground of this hope is rooted in the Fatherhood of God. Pagan faiths as well as Christian revelation and theistic philosophy teach that human souls are the offspring of God and bear his image and are bound up in fellowship with him. This relation involves mutual obligations and faithfulness. In begetting human souls God has passed the point of producing physical things, or even partial selves such as the lower animals appear to be, and has brought forth children that are capable of sharing his life and love. Such children, having been begotten, are therefore essential elements in the divine life and are, in a degree, necessary to its completeness and satisfaction. "The Father seeketh such to worship him." And the children never can be complete and satisfied without the Father. Without him they are waifs in a fatherless world, infants crying in the night and with no father to hear their cry. "Who can believe," asks Martineau, "that the everlasting Mind fulfills its end by disappointing every other?" "Will the affectionate God," asks William R. Alger, "permit the ox hoof of annihilation to tread in these sparrow nests of humanity so snugly ensconced in the fields of being? Love watches to preserve life. It were Moloch, not the universal Father, that would crush into death these multitudes of loving souls supplicating him for life, dash into silent fragments these miraculous personal harps of a thousand strings, each capable of vibrating celestial melody of praise and bliss." We think better of our God and even the heathen bowing down to wood and stone think better of their God than to believe this.

Christian Faith Grounded in Christ

The Christian faith in immortality is grounded in Christ himself. He believed and taught this faith and spoke as an eyewitness and traveler who had returned from the other world. Others have reasoned and speculated and dreamed about this hope, but he spoke with the accent of personal experience. His teaching was crowned with his character. That perfect blossom of humanity was too superbly pure and beautiful ever to perish. If that great Soul and white Spirit passed into nothingness, then there is no truth or justice or worth in all this world that can claim our respect and there is no

> blessed mood
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened.

This character of Christ was also crowned with his own resurrection, and this blazing seal of Christianity is supported by many proofs.

These grounds of belief in immortality give us such a degree of moral assurance that we can live under the power of the world to come. Such a hope lifts our dust into grandeur and makes all our days and deeds pulse with eternal significance. In our Father's house are many mansions.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. Is doubt about immortality growing in our day?
2. Give evidence that the mind is not a mechanism?
3. How can we say belief in immortality is universal when a considerable number of people deny it and say they do not want it?
4. Is immortality a constitutional endowment of the soul or is eternal life a gift of God to be attained?
5. What is the value of belief in immortality to you?

C

WHAT WILL BE THE END OF THE WORLD?

"THEN cometh the end." This world is not a finality. Transitoriness is stamped on all things human and earthly.

THE EARTH WILL END

The earth itself will end. It is not a stable planet, much less an eternal world. It certainly had a beginning and as certainly will have an end. The seeds of dissolution are planted in its very constitution and constituent atoms, and its doom was on it from the beginning. How it will end science is not sure, as it is not sure how it began. It may slowly freeze to death as it cools down and floats around the dying sun as a planetary corpse, like the moon, coffined, it may be, in ice and wrapped in a shroud of snow. It may be drawn in on a slowly winding spiral towards the sun and finally plunge into its fiery depths, the mother sun devouring her earth child. Or it may be suddenly blotted out in some cosmic collision. God is constantly creating and extinguishing worlds, as snowflakes are ceaselessly forming and melting in the air.

OUR HUMAN WORLD

Our human world is in process of the same dissolution and will finally end. The epitaph that is written over all things in this life is, "The fashion of this world passeth away." Nothing seems so frail as human life, even more perishable than its own most delicate fabrics. The pyramids stand millenniums after their builders are forgotten. "The Transfiguration" outlasts Raphael, and "the coin, Tiberius." The family portraits, mere bits of painted canvas, remain on our walls long after the living forms have vanished, so that the images seem to be the abiding realities and their originals the fleeting shadows.

Nowhere is this transitoriness so destructive and tragical as in our friendships, frequently dislocating them in this life and tearing them asunder in the dissolution and agony of death. All the works of human hands, houses and cities and empires are perishing, and our spirits are ever passing into the unseen. The very mountains are flowing down into the sea, and the whole heavens are a vast conflagration that will burn to extinction and leave only a stupendous cinder pile.

Just how humanity will end we do not know, whether by cooling earth or cosmic collision, and either way this end may be far off, even millions of years away; but the end is not less sure. And we may be thankful that humanity will end, for it will never be perfected on this earth. Evil will cling to it to the last. This world, however it may attain to the visions and dreams of prophets and poets, will always have evil mixed with its good, and these slumbering sparks may at times burst out in mighty conflagrations or end in a cataclysmic explosion. The devil is to be "loosed for a little time" at the end of his imprisonment (Rev. 20:1-3).

Time and Manner of the End

When the end of the world will come, how it will come, is one of the secret things we cannot know and best for us that we should not know. Scripture paints apocalyptic pictures of the end, but these visions are symbolical and poetic, giving us a sense of the majesty and mystery of the end, but are not to be taken literally, which would make them grotesque and impossible We have faith that the end will come in the right time when this world has run its course; and we have faith that it will come in the right way so as to end with a worthy conclusion and climax. The world demands judgment, and it will have its final assize. The saints of God are to receive rewards, and they will get them and the wicked are to reap the just retribution of their own doings. The glory of Christ is to be manifested, and he will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Heaven is to be ushered in as the eternal world, and God is to be all in all.

Appropriate Manifestation

All this calls for appropriate manifestation. The last act in the mighty drama of this world is figuratively represented in Scripture as being enacted and its curtain rung down in a grand amphitheater with fitting scenic symbols and splendors. But we must not materialize these scenes; "flesh and blood" will not appear on that stage. It will move in another realm of the spiritual and eternal. The figurative language of Scripture as to the final coming of our Lord and the judgment is the only way the grand end could be suggested even to our imagination. The reality will far surpass our poor power to conceive, and material images, when taken literally, only degrade it. Then all the visions and dreams of the prophets will receive their highest and final fulfillment. Then the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Then shall we be like them that dream, and our mouth shall be filled with laughter and our tongue with singing.

The Blessed Hope

The transitoriness of the world has ever been a minor note in the still sad music of humanity; its melancholy undertone is heard in our most triumphant and jubilant hours. Yet the temporal itself points to and has in it the promise and potency of the eternal. All the deepest and strongest intuitions and instincts of our being carry us beyond the transitory into the permanent. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but something must abide. The perishing world hides a secret that cannot perish.

This is the blessed hope. It completes and crowns this earthly life. (This world, that has been one age-long battle and has been burdened with sorrows and drenched with tears and blood, is worth while in view of this grand consummation. Crowned with this hope it "means intensely and means good." This is our final faith in God:

> That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

Suggestive Questions and Topics

1. What is science now teaching us as to the impermanence of matter?
2. What are some present scientific theories as to how the earth began and how it will end?
3. Is the world growing better?
4. How can we be ready for the end of the world?
5. Is death the end of the world and the coming of Christ for us?
6. Is the hope of immortality a present reality with us?

INDEX

Abelard, 280.
Agnosticism, What is? 33-36.
Alexander the Great, 129.
Alger, William R., quoted, 346.
Amusements, What should be our attitude toward? 320-323.
Anselm, 279-280.
Antioch, the gospel at, 242.
Apollinaris, 273.
Aristotle, 284.
Arius, 272.
Ascension, of Jesus, 233-236.
Athanasius, 272.
Atheism, outbreak of, 324-325
Augustine, 45, 268.
Aquinas, Thomas, 45, 280.

Balfour, A. J., quoted, 39, 300.
Baptism of Jesus, 124-127.
Barnabas, 246.
Bateson, William, quoted, 55.
Behaviorism, 37, 325.
Beethoven, 301.
Bergson, 41.
Bible, the, What is? 85-88; Is it right to study? 88-91; the Old Testament, 92-95; inspiration of, 103-106; means of meeting temptation, 130.
Bingle, Professor R. M., his survey of students and religion, 334.
Bishops, 259-260.
Boyer, Edward S., his book on religion in our colleges, 334
Browning, quoted, 221.
Buddhism, 71.
Budget, the, How can we idealize? 313-316.

Cæsar, 129, 133, 242.
Calvin, John, 45, 287, 321.
Carpenter, Jesus the, 120-124.
Catholicism, Roman, 270; How it arose and what it claims, 275-278; 285-288; changes in, 291.
Chesterton, G. K., 180.
Christianity, Are miracles essential to? 84; and the incarnation, 106-109; How it got out into the Gentile world, 240-243; conflict with Judaism, 247-250; How affected by paganism, 261-269; and the Renaissance, 284-285; Is it declining? 323-326; growth of, 325.
Church Schools, daily vacation and week-day, 340.
Church, the, and social classes, 123-124; the Jewish, 134-137; offices in, 257-260; What is the? 292-295.
Churches, modern, How they arose, 289-292.
Coming, of the Lord, the final, 350.
Commission, the great, 229-232.
Compton, Arthur H., quoted, 38
Conflict of science and religion, 75-76; 78-81.
Conscience, growing broader and finer, 65-66.
Controversy, its use, 274.
Corinth, Paul in, 251-255.
Councils, at Jerusalem, 247-250; the ancient ecumenical, 271-274; modern, 291-292.
Creeds, 291-292; 295.
Cross of Christ, meaning of, 224-225
Crucifixion of Jesus, 222-224.

Dancing, 322.
Darwin, 55.
Da Vinci, 284, 302.
Deacons, 258.
Definitions, of personality, 8; of religion, 68, 71; of science, 75; of philosophy, 76; of theology, 77; of a miracle, 82; of inspiration, 106; of ordinances, 211-213; of worship, 299.
Deissmann, 262.
Denny, James, quoted, 182.
Denominations, evils of, 341-342; difficulty of uniting, 343-344.
De Vries, 55.
Doubt, How Jesus dealt with John's, 184-187.

Eddington, Arthur S., quoted, 17-18.
Education, What is religious? 337-340.
Edwards, Jonathan, 45, 65.
Einstein, quoted, 15-16.
Elders, 259-260.
Emerson, quoted, 182.
Empire, the Roman, 270; 278-279; 283.
End of the world, 348-351.
Ephesus, Paul in, 252.
Erasmus, 284.
Eutyches, 273.
Evil in the world, 21-24; 49; 61-63.
Evolution, Is it irreligious? 50-53; 75-76; and the incarnation, 109; and immortality, 345.

Fairbairn, quoted, 280, 294
Fairweather, quoted, 263-264.
Fatherhood, of God, 26-29; 108; ground of belief in immortality, 346.
Fathers, the Church, What they accomplished, 268-271.
Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 342.
Feudalism, 279.
Foreign Missions, Are they a spent force? 327-330.

Gethsemane, Jesus in, 215-218.
Giving, a Christian duty, 309-312.
Gnosticism, 264-267.
God, why we believe in, 1-4; how we know, 4-8; why we believe in His personality, 8-11; Is God only a subjective idea, or also an objective reality? 11-15; How can we fit our concept of God into the universe? his trinitarian nature, 19-22; What is the character of? 22-24; the Fatherhood of, 26-29, 108; attributes of, 29-31; relation of to the world, 43-46; Providence of, 46-49; and evolution, 50-53; the Christlike, 192-193; Kingdom of, 296-299.
Gospel, the, how it got out into the Gentile world, 240-243
Gospels, the apocryphal, 117, 121, the Four, Are they trustworthy? 96-100.
Greek Orthodox Church, 275-276.
Greeks, their genius, 132-133; interview of Jesus with, 204-207; 268-269.

Haldane, J. S., quoted, 39.
Harnack, quoted. 266.
Harris, Rendal, quoted, 300.
Haydn, 301
Herod, Antipas, 184; the Great, 138.
Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII, 276-277
Hinduism, 71.
Hobbes, quoted, 278
Holiness of God, 31.
Horner, Francis, 198.
Huestis, Charles H., his book on Sunday, 316
Hugo, Victor, quoted, 199.
Humanism, as a religion, 73-74; of the Middle Ages, 284.
Hume, 41.
Huxley, Thomas H., quoted, 114.

Idealism, philosophy of, 45.

Illustrations, Jesus as master of, 178-179.
Immortality, 199, 209; why we believe in, 344-347.
Incarnation, the need of, 106-109; and evolution, 109; Why so long delayed? 110-113.
Inspiration of the Bible, 103-106.

Jeans, Sir James, quoted, 16-17.
Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship, 134-135; 180.
Jesus, character of God in, 24-25; how he handled the Old Testament, 92-93, 170; the incarnation of God, 106-109; virgin birth of, 113-117; childhood of, 117-120; a carpenter, 120-124; baptism of, 124-127; temptation of, 127-130; the world in which he lived, 131-134; his ministry, 138-141; his methods of work, 141-144; his teaching about the new birth, 145-148; his first miracle, 149-152; his first sermon, 152-155; his call of twelve disciples, 156-159; his Sermon on the Mount, 159-162; his model prayer, 163-166; strange things he did, 166-169; new things he taught, 170-173; as teacher, 173-176; his methods of teaching, 177-180; as incomparable speaker, 180-183; how he dealt with John's doubt, 184-187; what he said about himself, 190-194; his revelation of his cross, 194-197; his transfiguration, 197-200; his triumphal entry, 201-204; his interview with Greeks, 204-207; his last table talk with his disciples, 208-211; his institution of the Lord's Supper, 211-214; in Gethsemane, 215-218; his trial, 218-222; crucifixion of, 222-224; resurrection of, 225-229; his great commission, 229-232; his ascension, 233-236; and the church, 292-293; and denominations, 343-344.
John the Baptist, his baptism of Jesus, 124-127; at work, 142; how Jesus dealt with his doubt, 184-187.
Judaism, 134-137; conflict with Christianity, 247-250.
Judaizers, the, 247-250; 251.
Justice of God, 32.

Kingdom of God, how it started to grow, 142-144; nature of, 296-299.
Kingsley, Charles, quoted, 123.

Lamb, Charles, quoted, 195.
Lausanne, World Conference on Faith and Order, 290.
Law, universality of, as a religious difficulty, 79; in relation to miracles, 82-84.
Learning, Revival of, 282-285.
Letters, value of Paul's, 99-102; characteristics of, 254-257.
Lightfoot, John, 56.
Lincoln, 86, 182, 183, 235.
Lodge, Sir Oliver, quoted, 39.
Lotze, quoted, 11, 40.
Love of God, 32.
Luther, 183; 286-287.

McCosh, James, quoted, 52, 56.
Man, created in the image of God, 27-28; origin of, 53-57; What is? 57-60
Martineau, James, quoted, 346.
Materialism, What is? 36-39.
Meditation, need of, 317-318.
Messiah, Jesus proclaimed himself as the, 194.
Michelangelo, 284.
Millikan, Robert A, quoted, 39.
Mill, John Stuart, quoted, 49, 192, 195.
Miracles, What are? 81-84.
Missionary Review, quoted, 328.
Monasteries, 279, 338.
Music in worship, 300-301.
Mussolini, 283.

Nature, laws of, as habits of God, 45.
Napoleon, 183.
Nicæa, Council of, 272.

Offices in the church, how they arose, 257-260.
Omnipresence of God, 31.
Omniscience of God, 31.
Ordinances of religion, 125-126; 211-212; 295.

Paganism and Christianity, 264-267.
Palestine, 131-132.
Pantheism, What is? 40-43.
Parable, Jesus as master of, 170.
Paradox, Jesus as master of, 179-180.
Parthenon, the, 86.
Patton, C. H, his book on foreign missions, 328.
Patton, Francis L, quoted, 52.
Paul, his conversion, 243-246; opposition to Judaistic restriction of Christianity, 248-250; his missionary journeys, 250-253; his portrait drawn by himself, 254-257; on Mars Hill, 331-332.
Peabody, Francis G., quoted, 256-257.
Pentecost, what happened at, 236-239.
Personality, defined, 8; of God, 9-11.
Pharisees, 137; how Jesus broke with, 187-190; 319.
Philo, 262.
Phipps, L. R., J. E., and D. M., their book on amusements, 320.
Pictures, the moving and talking, 320.
Pilate and the trial of Jesus, 218-222; 224.
Plato, 182, 263, 284, 345.
Pope, the, 186, 259.
Prayer, the Lord's, 163-166; nature of, 299-300.
Predestination, 48.
Protestantism, 287; tragedy and weakness of, 289-290.
Providence of God, 45-50.
Puritanism, 321.

Raphael, 284, 348.
Reformation, What was the? 285-288.
Religion, What is? 67-70; definition of, 67-68; Can there be religion without God? 71-74; relation to science, 75-81.
Religions, Other, What should be our Christian attitude toward? 330-333.
Renaissance, the, 282-285.
Renan, quoted, 195.
Resurrection of Jesus, 225-229.
Reuchlin, 284.
Roman Empire, 133, 270.
Rome, Paul in, 252-253.
Ross, Edward A., quoted, 328.

Sacrifice, the principle of, 207, 213, 262
Sadducees, 136-137.
Scholasticism, What was? 269-272.
Schoolmen, the, 279-281.
Science, Christian, 41.
Science, What is? 75-76; conflict with religion, 75; 78-81
Self-expression, danger of, 60.
Seneca, 263.
Shakespeare, quoted, 58, 86, 345.
Sin, What is? 61-64; Is the sense of, declining? 64-67.
Skepticism, Has it captured our colleges? 334-337.
Social Gospel, the, 306-309.
Speaker, Jesus as master, 180-183.
Speer, Robert E, quoted, 327, his book on foreign missions, 327-328
Spinoza, 40
Streeter, Canon B. H., quoted, 260.
Sunday, How shall we use the Christian? 316-319.

Sunday School, the, 339-340.
Supper, the Lord's, 211-214.
Synagogue, the, 136.

Taft, Chief Justice, quoted, 94.
Teaching, Jesus as master of, 173-180.
Theater, the, 321-322.
Temple, the Jewish, 134-135.
Temptation of Jesus, 127-130.
Tennyson, quoted, 351.
Testament, the Old, 92-95; how Jesus handled, 92-93; relation of the New to, 93-94; influence of, 94-95, how Jesus corrected and spiritualized, 170-171.
Theism, 106-107.
Theology, What is? 77.
Tradition, its place in religion, 189-190.
Transfiguration of Jesus, 197-200
Trinity, the, What is? 19-22
Truth, of God, 31-32; religious, 19-22.
Tyndall, John, quoted, 37.

Vastness of the universe as a religious difficulty, 80-81.
Virgin Birth of Jesus, 113-117.
Voltaire, quoted, 325.

War, growing conscience against, 66.
Webster, Daniel, 198.
Wells, H. G., 41.
Wesley, John, quoted, 302.
Wilson, Woodrow, quoted, 52-53.
Wines, Dr. E. C., quoted, 94
Wordsworth, quoted, 347.
Work, Christian, 303-306.
World Missionary Atlas, quoted, 329.
World War, the, 324, 327.
Worship, What is? 299-302; day of, 318-319.

Union, Church, 277-294; What is the outlook for? 341-344; how Jesus handled, 343-344.
Unitarianism, 107.

Zwingli, 284

CPSIA information can be obtained at www.ICGtesting.com
Printed in the USA
LVOW131421270911

248098LV00004B/9/P

9 781179 651422

9 781179 651422

YO-EBV-236